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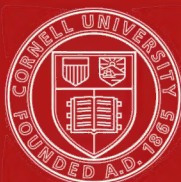
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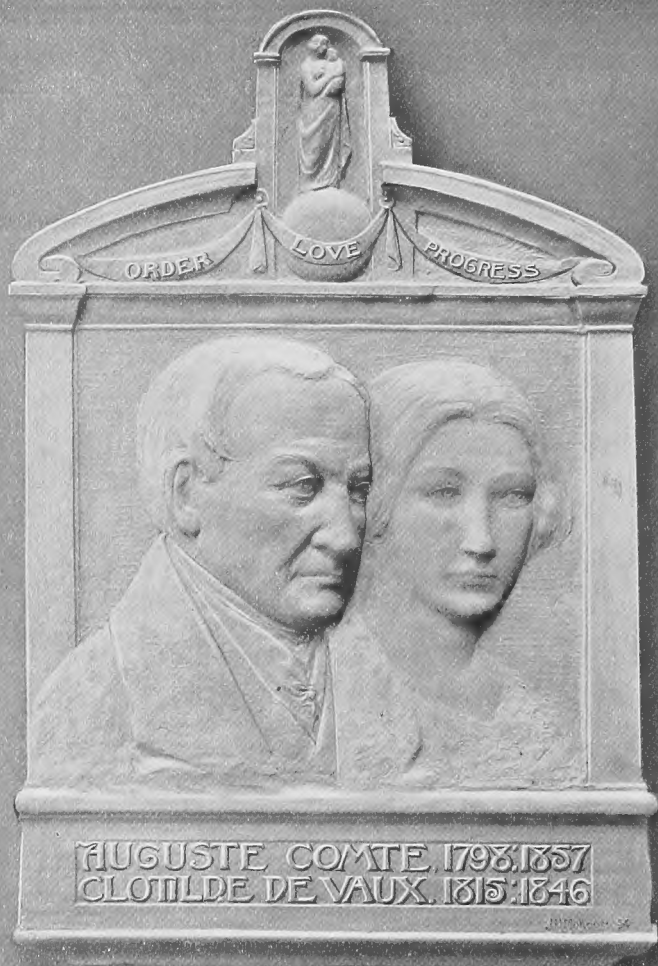


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CONFESSIONS AND TESTAMENT OF
AUGUSTE COMTE : AND HIS CORRES-
PONDENCE WITH CLOTILDE DE VAUX



Confessions and Testament of Auguste Comte: and his Corres- pondence with Clotilde de Vaux

Edited by
Albert Crompton

Liverpool
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PREFATORY NOTE

THE 'Correspondence' has been translated by several members of the Church of Humanity, Liverpool. The Letter on Marriage (page 219) and that on Social Commemoration (the First Saint Clotilde) are reprinted from translations by Mrs. Congreve.

The Dedication of the Polity (Second Saint Clotilde, and sometimes called Confession No. 1) and the Final Invocation are reprinted from translations by Dr. Bridges and Dr. Congreve respectively.

The remaining ten Saint Clotildes (Nos. 3 to 12, generally known as the Confessions) have been translated by Henry Dix Hutton, except that No. 12 was left unfinished at the time of his death; it has been completed by Dr. Edward Nicholson, who has also translated the 'Thoughts of a Flower' (page 164), and given most valuable assistance with the Correspondence and the St. Clotildes.

For the editing of the whole I am responsible.

The prayers of Auguste Comte will be found in the book *Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux* of which copies can be had on application to the Lyceum Press.

ALBERT CROMPTON

Liverpool, year 54 (1908)

The sudden death of Albert Crompton in October, 1908, has delayed the publication of this book. With the exception of the addition of the 'Introduction' it has been left as edited by him.

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INTRODUCTION

FOR those unacquainted with the lives of Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux, a few words upon their main facts may be of assistance in reading the Correspondence and other writings included in this volume.

As it is to the spiritual union between the two lives that we owe the Religion of Humanity, so the general comprehension of how this union came about is of the deepest significance to all who share in the aspirations for the universal Faith.

Auguste Comte was born at Montpellier, on January 19, 1798. From the age of sixteen his life was spent in Paris, and after leaving the Polytechnic School, he earned his living by teaching mathematics. His chief aim in life, even from his boyhood, was the reorganisation of thought in all social and moral questions.

With this aim in view he wrote his first work, the *Positive Philosophy*, the first volume of which was published in 1830, and the remaining five at intervals up to 1842. This work was preliminary to his second and most important work, the *Positive Polity*. The *Philosophy* was the revising the whole structure of preliminary science or Natural Philosophy in order to crown the summit with the final science of Man or Morals.

But although 'science' was constituted, the *Religion of Humanity* was yet to arise. The social aspirations of Auguste Comte had to take a more definite form before the revelation of Humanity could be brought forth to the world.

We have seen how Auguste Comte came to Paris upon leaving school; he continued to live there, alone, unguided by any family life. What wonder is it then that with his ardent and enthusiastic temperament, he should have fallen into the dangers which beset a student in such a position, or that he should, as a result

of, and to complete these errors, have been led into a marriage which was against the wishes of his parents, and proved the greatest misfortune of his life. His wife had no real love for him or sympathy with his aspirations, she frequently left him, and at last, in 1838, he announced to her that the next time she did so, it must be for ever. In 1842 she quitted his roof, never to be re-admitted.

Auguste Comte continued his work in solitude, his servant, Sophie Thomas, afterwards his adopted daughter, faithfully attending him. She, her husband and children occupied part of his house until his death.

In the autumn of 1844, Auguste Comte was giving lessons to a young man, Maximilien Marie. Invited by him to his home, he became acquainted there with his sister, Madame Clotilde de Vaux.

Her life in its few melancholy details is soon told. Born in 1815, she was married by her parents at the age of 20 to Amédée de Vaux, who occupied the position of tax collector at Méru. There was born of the marriage one child who did not survive. In 1839, de Vaux, led on by a passion for gaming, disappeared, taking with him the sums he had collected in his employment, and was never heard of again. He left his wife entirely destitute, and she returned to her own family upon whom, at the time she met Auguste Comte, she was dependent. Her brother, Maximilien Marie was now married, and the family lived together in rue Pavée. Clotilde de Vaux, however, rented a small apartment of her own in the next street, No. 5 rue Payenne.

The correspondence, dating from May, 1845, to March, 1846, explains the mutual relation of these two, Comte and Clotilde, who were to be the founders of the new religion. Clotilde de Vaux died on April 5, 1846, of consumption, which had, unknown to all, attacked her at the time the acquaintance began.

Her influence, so strongly exerted during that one unexampled year, instead of ceasing with her death, continued in the heart of Auguste Comte and enabled him to elaborate the ideas which had already been inspired during their objective intercourse. He now composed and executed his *Positive Polity*,

of which mention is frequently made in his St. Clotildes. It is the application to human life of the truths of science and it founds the *Religion of Humanity*.

The first of the St. Clotildes, 12 in number, was a token of affection from Comte on her Saint's day, St. Clotilde, 3 June. 1845. The remaining eleven are annual addresses written by him after her death, and in them can be traced the development of the higher ideals which were the result of his worship of her. She was the first representative of Humanity, as he was Her eldest son and first High Priest.

(Further information on the life and works of Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux may be found in the 'Positive Polity,' 'The Catechism of Positive Religion,' and in the general correspondence of Auguste Comte, of which there are several volumes in the original French).

M. C.

SUMMARY OF THE LIVES OF
AUGUSTE COMTE AND
CLOTILDE DE VAUX

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Summary of the Lives of Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux

Composed by R. T. Mendes from the materials furnished by
the prayers of Auguste Comte

(See *Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux, Church of Humanity*
Liverpool, 1907)

INTRODUCTION

SOLITUDE

Period passed by our Master in forming the principal moral
conceptions before he experienced the regenerating influence
of Clotilde.

THE INCOMPARABLE YEAR

U N I O N

(*Preamble*)

October, 1844, to May, 1845. Opening portion disturbed by passion

FIRST PART

FUNDAMENTAL INITIATION

June—Esteem

July—Confidence

August—Affection

SECOND PART

INEVITABLE TRANSITION

(September, October, November, and December, 1845)

Decisive Crisis—(September)

1 to 10 September—Danger and Salvation

10 to 30 September—Resignation

Final Transition (October, November, and December)

October—Complete confidence

November—Unreserved confidence

December—Continued familiarity

THIRD PART

NORMAL STATE

(January, February, and March, 1846)

January—Complete intimacy

February—Perfect identity

March—Definitive union

(Finale)

28 March to 10 April, 1846, Sacred Passion

— — —

CONCLUSION

U N I T Y

Period of the moral development of our Master under the influence of Clotilde.

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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN
AUGUSTE COMTE AND
CLOTILDE DE VAUX



Correspondence between Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux (1845-6)

(Including Clotilde's poem *Thoughts of a Flower* and
Auguste Comte's *Letter on Marriage*')

Letter 1. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday, 30 April, 1845 (noon)

MADAME

Knowing by experience how difficult it is to leave off the reading of *Tom Jones* having once begun it, for whatever reason, I am hastening to send you a translation which will save you from having to enjoy this admirable *chef-d'œuvre* through the medium of an unsatisfactory paraphrase. As I have the original work, you will not inconvenience me in the least by keeping this copy as long as you please.

If I appear to be over solicitous in my attention, I must plead as my excuse the satisfaction I feel in giving you pleasure.

Pray accept, Madame, on this occasion, the most sincere assurance of the affectionate regard of

Your devoted servant

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 2. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday, 1 May, 1845

Your kindness makes me very happy and very proud, Monsieur. I feel too impatient to wait for a better opportunity of telling you how much pleasure *Tom Jones* is giving me. Since your superiority does not prevent you from being 'all things to all men,' I look forward with much pleasure to having a talk with you on the subject of this little *chef-d'œuvre*, and I hope that your beautiful and noble teachings may sometimes find their way into my heart and mind.

Pray accept, Monsieur, with the expression of my gratitude, that of my great esteem.

DE VAUX, née MARIE

Letter 3. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday, 2 May, 1845 (2 p.m.)

MADAME

Neither can I wait for the happy occasion of our meeting, to express to you how much I am touched by the kind and gracious reception you deign to accord to a very small mark of attention, which, besides being very naturally paid to you, was especially warranted by the occasion which presented itself.

The value that you are good enough to attach to my conversation emboldens me to say that it would be a great satisfaction to me to see the opportunities for it increased as far as you think proper. I have often been judged somewhat unsociable, —having failed to find in others a disposition of mind, and still more, of heart, sufficiently in harmony with my own. But in reality I have none the less always appreciated the sweet exchange of sentiments and thoughts as the principal source of human happiness, when the requisite conditions can be satisfactorily fulfilled. The ease and confidence, which I am happy to say I feel in the society of your relations, should clearly point out to you my natural tendency duly to appreciate your kind and agreeable conversation. Besides the elevated tone and nobleness of sentiment that seem natural to all your interesting family, a melancholy coincidence in the circumstances of our lives forms a still more special bond between you and myself.

Pray accept, Madame, the renewal of the most sincere and affectionate respect of

Your devoted servant

A^{te} COMTE*Letter 4. From AUGUSTE COMTE*

Wednesday morning, 14 May, 1845 (7 o'clock)

MADAME

Besides the very natural wish I have to come and thank you for your kind visit, I am specially anxious to obliterate any impression left in your mind by the awkward and unmeaning appearance of the reception you met with here yesterday.* I may hope that your happy feminine tact, in concert with a not undeserved indulgence, will naturally have already explained this

* Image of 13 May, 1845.—Ed.

unusual embarrassment to have arisen either from a slight indisposition, or perhaps rather from the presence of two persons who, being unknown to you, caused my inexperience in such matters to allow the conversation to become too vague or commonplace; but even this favourable interpretation could not compensate for the disappointment of such an evening. Nevertheless, however wishful I may be to come in person to make my apologies, I am still more anxious not to annoy you, or even to disturb you. If, then, for any reason whatever, that I shall respect without even trying to penetrate, you should prefer only to receive my visit at the house of your relatives,* I would beg of you to tell me so frankly, and I shall be able to resign myself to this imperfect satisfaction. In that case, as I have lately observed that the time you now go there unfortunately coincides with the time when I naturally have to leave, I will in future make my calls there after dinner, presuming that you generally spend the evening there; the necessary change in my regular habits will very soon be forgotten in consideration of the motive. I hope, Madame, this little explanation, that it was well perhaps to give once for all, may not appear to you in any way presumptuous, and that you will attribute it only to the respectful affection of

Your devoted servant

Ate COMTE

Letter 5. From CLOILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 15 May, 1845

You have a heart made to understand that of a woman, Monsieur, and I can only gratefully accept the sincerity with which you speak of all that concerns me. I accept with happiness the interest and affection that you are good enough to bestow upon me, and at my own home as well as at my relatives' I hope to prove to you the price that I attach to it. My position as a lone woman has made it unusual for me to receive men visitors, yet sometimes I do receive them, and I shall hold it an honour to count you among the number. If the offer that you have the kindness to make me, that we should meet in the evenings, is not by far too disinterested, it would suit me perfectly and would, I am sure, also be welcome to my family.

* House in the rue Pavée where Clotilde's parents lived.—Ed.

Pray, then, accept once more the assurance of my gratitude for your kindness, and treat me a little as an old friend. I quite understood your good intentions towards me the evening before last, but I assure you, Monsieur, that I had much pleasure in hearing your account of the Academy, and that listening is always in itself a great pleasure.

Accept, Monsieur, the expression of my deepest regards and that of my highest esteem.

DE VAUX, *née* MARIE

Letter 6. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday, 17 May, 1845 (4 o'clock)

DEAR MADAME

Notwithstanding the verbal assurance of your kind indulgence towards me, that I received unexpectedly yesterday,* I cannot help attaching great importance to the precious note that has only just reached me, even if it were only in order to be able to read it over again as often as I have the preceding one. I should certainly be very ungrateful if I did not hasten to assure you, however feebly, of my most sincere gratitude. It is true that I had, of my own accord, before I was made happy by your permission, ceased to fight against the host of sweet feelings that have gradually drawn me towards you. I now find that the growth of these feelings has become necessary to the full satisfaction of my moral being, which has hitherto been unduly stunted by the pressure of circumstances; but the uncertainty of obtaining your kind indulgence has placed a check upon the transports of a heart that feared more than anything to offend you, so long as it had not your permission openly to bestow upon you the affection of an elder brother. Since I cannot, alas, become younger, why are not you, Madame, less beautiful and less lovable, so as to compensate a little for the fatal disparity of my moral youthfulness and my physical maturity!—but the one is, in reality, hardly more possible than the other. I hope, at least, that the purity, the depth, and the constancy of my devotion, together with the natural similarity of our situations, will succeed in gradually diminishing this radical obstacle. Both of us being involuntarily placed in the same exceptional condition, we are, in

* Image of 16 May, 1845.—Ed.

the eyes of every pure and intelligent being, morally justified in there finding, as far as possible, that legitimate satisfaction of heart which we are both fully convinced that we have loyally sought in vain, and too long waited for, in the conditions of ordinary social existence. May we, through each other's assistance, honourably attain this !

How much gratitude do I not already owe you for having thus revived my moral nature by the most unforeseen impulsion, at the very time when I was obliged sadly to renounce every hope of such happiness ! Certainly it is delightful to experience the high feelings of universal love with which, as a general rule, my own work inspires me ; but how much their vague philosophic energy is wanting in the power to satisfy my real need of affection ! Neither yourself, Madame, on the one side, nor my philosophic adherents on the other, will ever have to fear any real conflict between the two kinds of emotion which I feel, and which I shall be able to harmonise perfectly, the one even strengthening the other. When the noble Vauvenargues said : ' Great thoughts come from the heart,' he did not probably feel all the deep reality of this instinctive perception. I am very sure, in fact, that all high aspirations, moral or mental, are essentially at one and mutually stimulate each other. We can more fully appreciate physical and moral beauty, and beauty of intellect, through the gradual increase of their affinity. This happy connection between the mental and the affective growth is applicable in general to all great works whatsoever, notwithstanding all that the stupid austerity of our cold pedants may preach. But surely it belongs more especially to work which, directly relating, like mine, to social philosophy, has as its constant object to develop as much as possible the greatness of human nature, which ought above all to depend on generous feelings, even more than on breadth of view. It is, then, my charming friend (since you deign to allow this title) without any vain sentimental affectation, foreign to my nature, but according to a conviction, proved as much by reason as by feeling, that I rejoice in the happy coincidence of the sweet re-animation of my moral nature due to you, with the dawning elaboration of my second great work. This work, far from suffering from such a conjunction, will certainly be much the better for it, as pleasant experience already clearly points out to me. What a wonderful contrast it puts before me when I compare it

with the sad state of repressed feeling into which I was helplessly plunged when I began, fifteen years ago, my fundamental work, which was almost entirely executed under this painful pressure ! I am so deeply imbued by this salutary reaction that I should not hesitate some day to address to you the public dedication of a work in which you will have thus indirectly co-operated, if propriety did not prevent my making such an avowal. But whoever may be the friends that I shall ultimately honour in this manner, a secret reservation will always direct the best part of my deep gratitude towards her who, in reviving the spring of my tenderest feelings, will have efficaciously helped forward my philosophic impulsion. In truth, inasmuch as such an un hoped-for state of things is not yet firmly established, these precious emotions, these tender effusions, these delicious tears, in short, the sum of all the affections whose total may be so much more easily felt than described, contribute at present, in the silence of my long nights, to prolong, for the time being, a passing physical trouble, which the first effort of again taking up my ordinary work had brought on : but I would not willingly exchange these enchanting sleepless nights for the most perfect health possible. Besides, I am quite convinced that the different indispensable conditions of this new existence will not be long in attaining a natural balance and arrangement to the profit alike of my work, my happiness, and even of my physical health, without ever giving you any cause, however slight, for scruple on its account.

I am delighted that my proposition, much less disinterested than you imagine, of meeting in future in the evenings at the house of your dear relatives (I was almost saying ' our ') should be quite agreeable to them and to you ; I shall not be slow in beginning to put it into effect, but on account of my regular engagements our meetings cannot generally take place except on Wednesdays and Fridays. Perhaps I may be able at an earlier date to avail myself of the permission you have still more kindly granted me, which I shall be able, I hope (whatever my wishes may be), always to use with the discreet moderation that your isolation demands.

As you have had the goodness to think of me with regard to the Cluny museum, and as you yourself have not yet been there, I hope that you will allow me to seize a new opportunity of a happy meeting, and that we may go together, at the time you may appoint, the better to revive in us, by sight of these inestimable relics, a noble and tender recollection of mediæval times, as

yet not fully appreciated, notwithstanding the superficial affectation of fashionable platitudes.

Farewell, dear Madame, take better care of your precious health, and graciously accept the heart's affection, already deep, of

Your respectful friend

Ate COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

I must beg of you specially to notice my number. If you look at your two fair hands at the same time you will not be able to forget it in future. While I was thinking of going to the post-office to complain of the strange delay of your dear letter, information I have just received has made me aware of the true cause, which I ought previously to have learnt from the various official alterations of the address. In writing No. 5 instead of the proper number, you have almost made a student opposite, whose name is very much like mine, much too happy, and I owe the avoidance of this fatal mistake only to the kind thoughtfulness of a postman who knows me. My official polytechnic title, however insignificant it may be, will become in future very dear to me through a useful excess of details if it contributes to prevent this double disaster from actually occurring. Pray remember me kindly to your family. I hope that the unusual fatigue your charming sister underwent yesterday did not have any bad result—notwithstanding the care necessary in her condition.

I leave you with regret, although to you this scrawl may seem somewhat lengthy.

— — —

Letter 7. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 20 May, 1845 (6 o'clock)

DEAR MADAME

I with difficulty kept from going to see you yesterday, partly not to interfere with your carefully thinking over my decisive letter of Saturday, partly to be thus able to prove, at least by your silence, in default of a more distinct approval, that it has not shocked you. But, unfortunately, I cannot come to-day either, as I had intended, on account of insomnia more complete than that from which I suffered all last week. I was unable to get a single instant's sleep, and this time there can be no doubt that the trouble is specially due to the state of my feelings. Although this state

of weakness is without any pain, and even brings with it a certain melancholy charm, it makes it impossible for me to go out at all to-day, even to my polytechnic duties in the evening. Yet it is very sad to remain so long without seeing you, and put still further off an indispensable explanation, but I must resign myself, and I hasten to let you know in case you may have expected me.

You see that, according to your kind wish, I am treating you already as an old friend. These few lines will somewhat diminish the pain I feel at not being able to come. Prudence, also, preventing me from doing any work, I shall be wholly occupied with you to-day, and your two dear letters will still suffice to feed all my solitary reveries.

Your respectful friend

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 8. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday morning, 21 May, 1845 (6 o'clock)

DEAR MADAME

My short note of yesterday morning must have displeased you. I wish I had not written it : it shows an insistence at least indiscreet, if not childish, besides being unworthy of myself and of you ; be kind enough to attribute it to the temporary loss of my self-control, caused by some bodily disturbance. Although this note is only intended to make up for my mistake and to ask forgiveness, the first sight of it may try your patience, making you dread a daily deluge of similar outpourings. Have no fear, Madame, of anything of the kind. The spontaneous reflections of yesterday's day-dreams, helped by a little sleep, have already sufficiently re-established in me such degree of generosity and reason as I usually possess. It will be, I hope, the only time, my dear lady, that I shall have been thus led to take the slightest advantage of the confiding esteem with which you deign to honour me. I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow, but do not anticipate any awkward questions. Unless from accident in the post, which is very unlikely, you will certainly have received my long letter of Saturday, in which the state of my heart is clearly shown to you, though perhaps with an excess of frankness, or at least of precipitation, for which my strange inexperience should form an excuse. Therefore, it must

suffice me now that you have been willing to receive and to keep this decisive communication: besides, it is not for me in any way either to interpret your silence on this subject, or to determine the duration of your own deliberations, or the form of your decision, whatever it may be. I must, with regard to this, await with respectful patience the candid judgment of your heart and mind without any interference by an ill-timed explanation. There is really nobility as well as sweetness in the deep feeling which animates me, Madame. I am perfectly convinced that this deep feeling cannot but procure my happiness by contributing, as its nature is so capable of doing, to the daily object of my whole private life—my own moral improvement. So far from making me more exacting, more self-indulgent or selfish, it will always tend, I hope, greatly to increase my purity, my delicacy, and my generosity. Its inevitable reaction upon you must have the same habitual character; it will tend to soften rather than to accentuate the painful position in which you are placed. The similarity of our two positions must make me more ready to understand and respect it.

Awaiting, without any undue impatience, the happy moment of seeing you again, pray accept, dear Madame, the most sincere homage of the deep affection of

Your respectful friend

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 9. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday morning, 21 May, 1845

I have suffered too much, Monsieur, not to be at least sincere, and if I have not replied to your letter of Saturday, it is because it caused me painful feelings, that I should not have been able to hide from you. In accepting your friendship and the interest you take in me, I must own that I thought to contribute to your happiness, and to mine: it has been painful to me to have to fear the contrary. If I had not accustomed myself, for some time past, to hide my feelings, I should have inspired you with pity rather than love, I am sure. During the last year I have been wondering each night if I should have strength to live through the next day. It is not with such thoughts that one can do anything rash. You do not know me, and the kindness of your heart has, I feel, led you to magnify to yourself

the interest that my misfortune inspires. But I beg of you to let your noble heart and mind have free play for a moment in relation to my affairs, and you will not then feel inclined to offer me a single reproach. Spare my feelings, as I desire to spare yours : I do not feel less acutely than you.

Farewell, Monsieur Comte ; rely upon and receive the lasting assurance of my affection and esteem.

DE VAUX, *née* MARIE

— —

Letter 10. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday, 21 May, 1845 (noon)

DEAR MADAME

I trembled this morning on seeing your dear hand-writing, before you could have read the letter that I wrote you to repair an inconsiderate attempt. My anxiety has, alas, been justified, and the painful letter that I have just read, suddenly makes me feel the whole extent of my fault. Those who propose to direct others have very often themselves need of all indulgence, and I fear that I hardly deserve yours. One terrible sentence in this striking letter would inspire me with serious alarm and deep remorse if I did not think that your gentleness and sagacity would have been able to discern my really honourable impulse beneath the appearance due to inexperience and precipitation. Perhaps under the circumstances I ought not to see you to-morrow, as I proposed to you this morning ; I will do so however unless you forbid it, so as to reassure you for the future by showing you that I have already been able to regulate my feelings sufficiently,—men of my nature only need tender counsel to enable them to avoid what might prove a real catastrophe. Your affectionate remonstrances with my faults can only at present greatly increase the need I feel of making you soon forget them. You may rely, dear Madame, on the affection, as pure as enduring, of

Your respectful friend

A^{te} COMTE

————

Letter 11. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday, 21 May, 1845

Thank you for your last note, Monsieur. It will always give me great pleasure to see you, and I hope that we shall manage to avoid embarrassing subjects of conversation. I cannot be at

home to-morrow, nor for some days after, as I have to visit a sick friend. We will give you some music at rue Pavée when you come there: I am going to spend almost every day there until the confinement.

Farewell, Monsieur Comte, believe in my kind feelings towards you, and keep for me those of a friend.

C. DE VAUX, née MARIE

Letter 12. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday morning, 24 May, 1845 (6 o'clock)

DEAR MADAME

I should have had the satisfaction of seeing you yesterday, at your relatives' house, but for the fact that my weakness and melancholy depression were considerably aggravated after spending a period of ten days with hardly any sleep, and in spite of a suitably abstemious regimen. Being obliged first to give up all my own work, and then all my daily official duties, to-morrow I shall also have to miss, for the first time in fifteen years, my public Sunday lesson. In addition to all this, I have been obliged for the last two days to stay in bed, and I do not know how long this state of things may last—though at the same time I am in no pain and my condition is in no way dangerous.

As the true source of my illness is well known to you, you will not tax me with imprudence in not having yet called in my doctor. As my resignation and my regimen save me from fever and digestive irritation, my condition would not in his eyes be sufficiently marked for any treatment to be of use. As long as my illness remains purely nervous, my inexhaustible patience is the only true specific of which it will admit. Besides, I am helped by the ever-growing thought of the chaste happiness that our innocent affection promises me in the future, when it shall have become as pure in me as it is already naturally with you.

The necessary transformation that you have thought right to insist upon in my feelings is much more painful than you could suppose. But it will only be the more praiseworthy on that account, and I persevere loyally in trying to accomplish it, as I see now how necessary it is to your happiness and to my own. My active desire after moral improvement, for a time impaired by an entrancing passion, has now met with a noble re-awakening and has even been impelled to greater energy by the touching

eloquence resulting from your melancholy situation, as expressed in your letter of Wednesday morning. I feel now that this serious combat will soon terminate to my honour and to our profit, so as to permit the gradual realisation of the sweet hopes that you attached at first to this pure intimacy, which I was on the point of making you lose by a momentary error.

Besides, dear friend, the nervous illness resulting from this moral conflict must in its turn facilitate and hasten its happy issue. For with high-minded natures, nothing helps so much to purify our affections as phases of physical weakness, when our grosser impulses naturally become weaker, and our finer ones are stimulated.

Farewell, dear Madame, and believe me, henceforth and for ever,
Your faithful friend

A^{te} COMTE

If my illness should become complicated, I have the double advantage of an excellent doctor, in whom I have long had confidence, and also, what is certainly neither less rare nor less precious, a perfect domestic servant, whose active devotion I have already experienced.

Letter 13. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday morning, 28 May, 1845 (9 o'clock)

MADAME

Thanks to my continued precautions, and without any recourse to my doctor, but still more, thanks to the inexpressible calm that all just triumph of duty over inclination procures, my state of health is now so much improved that I may think of again taking up my daily duties the day after to-morrow (Friday). In that case I shall not fail to come and see you at your kind relatives' house.

Though you have not yet answered my letter of Saturday the 24th, I hope that it has already somewhat dissipated the natural anxiety with which my former unwise confessions must have inspired you, for it shows my firm resolution henceforward to respect the limits prescribed by virtue to which you were forced to recall me, when my thoughts had dared, for a moment, to disregard them. Besides your general knowledge of my loyalty, my utter incapability of dissimulation which had involuntarily led me to alarm you, should be a special guarantee to you now

of the sincerity of my repentance, and of the thoroughness of a conflict, which was of a nature no less noble than painful and is now about to end to my honour.

Without having seen you I have then succeeded in passing through this short initial crisis, and the same week has seen my pen both commit and repair a serious wrong, the thought of which, and the mistrust consequent thereon, it will be my future business to make you forget. The grossness of my sex imposed upon me, no doubt, this stormy transition before entering upon the pure field of a true friendship, which womanly delicacy permits you to attain at once without any such preparation. You, like everyone else, must have remarked in me this striking peculiarity, proper rather to my heart than to my head, and though unusual, not unprecedented, by which I retain, whilst fully arrived at maturity, all the freshness and impetuosity of youth, with all the advantages of its spontaneity, but at the same time with all the inconvenience of its inexperience. This, Madame, though you may not be aware of it, is doubtless the real reason of your wise indulgence for my recent follies, but you could not have known that this heart, so capable of expansion, must be all the more sensitive, because up to this time it has never been able fully to assert itself. How unlikely it was that you should have been the one to find there the only really firm and deep affection that I have yet experienced! Yet nothing is more true: for my fatal marriage was not, on the whole, the result of a real passion: it was mainly prompted by thoughtless generosity, in exchange for a confession which seemed of the fullest. May this sincere avowal, showing still more strongly that my fault was due to the rashness of my youth, now procure me fuller pardon for my first involuntary wrong towards you. Seeing how completely ignorant you were of these most peculiar circumstances, how deep must have been the esteem and confidence with which I had at first the honour of inspiring you, to enable the impression they left to resist unimpaired a shock which would perhaps have given them an irreparable blow in the case of any woman less clear-sighted and less pure! For I hardly know, Madame, which I should admire the most, the marvellous sagacity of your judgment, or the exquisite impartiality of your decisions.

Before seeing you again, I feel to-day the need of expressing to you the respect and gratitude with which I feel myself for ever deeply affected, for your admirable conduct throughout this

difficult crisis, in which your reason has always been equal to your delicacy, and where your gentle kindness never interfered with your just firmness. How much superior your practical wisdom showed itself to be, notwithstanding the contrast of our ages and my vain philosophic pre-eminence ! It is true that I alone was influenced by passion, which explains to a certain extent my special inferiority. If, then, you thought at first that I did not understand you, I hope that for the future you will not retain any doubt on the subject. For what has just passed constitutes certainly one of those rapid but decisive phases, in which the whole moral nature unfolds itself more effectually in a few days than during many years in the ordinary course of things. It is this which makes such events specially suitable for dramatic art, even when the whole action consists, as in this case, simply of conversation. You should now be assured that I understand you at least as well as you understand me. Admirable as your conduct has been, it has not at all surprised me, for I have found it quite in agreement with what I expected of you.

It is so important to me, Madame, that no one should be able to tax me with light conduct in what must constitute the principal event of the rest of my private life, that you cannot blame my special insistence in correcting the one unimportant error into which you have been drawn, in believing that I loved you without knowing you. Although this mistake is too natural, not to be very excusable, it is at the same time in direct contradiction to the project of friendship which we have in common : for everybody knows that friendship, still more than love, requires a basis of deep esteem before all things, and this means a true previous appreciation of one another. When your indulgent wisdom has spontaneously given me back that precious permission to visit you personally, a permission which my temporary boldness justly determined you to suspend before I had once profited by it, we shall be able again to take up this interesting subject, unless your friendly scheme of discipline should think fit to place it among the 'embarrassing topics of conversation.' I will then show you in what and how I knew you much better, long before this characteristic crisis, than you can have supposed. Though, doubtless, I have so far rather guessed than observed your character, my judgment of you has rested hardly less on special indications than on general principles. At present it is enough for me to recall to you a single decisive characteristic, I mean the

remarkable determination, so congenial to my own character, which has led you to refuse a position of agreeable comfort even when well-earned, at the price of personal dependence which, with souls of our temper, could never be quite honourable, with whatever vain decoration it may be covered. Do you think, my honoured lady, that many such proofs would be needed by a true connoisseur to discover an eminent moral organisation? Oh! who could possess such a treasure, and not be able to appreciate it?

Whilst I am looking forward, Madame, to the happiness of meeting you on Friday evening, it is a pleasure to me to prolong this natural effusion, the sweet privilege of friendship. It may further serve to prove the reality of the moral regeneration, upon which you have rightly insisted in those constant feelings, henceforth sufficiently purified, &c

Your true friend

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 14. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday, 29 May, 1845

I was happy to hear of your recovery, Monsieur, and I shall also be happy to see you again, if you consent to my wish of entirely putting aside embarrassing subjects of conversation. I should reproach myself all my life if I brought trouble to a sensitive heart; let us not, then, discuss our feelings, and let us try to put as much gaiety as we can into our conversation. I receive your incense with the humility which becomes me. I have not yet met with perfection either in others or in myself. Every human heart has its sore places; everything turns on our being able to hide them.

I wish you very sincerely all the happiness that you deserve, Monsieur. I should like to see you overcome all those who have tried, and still try to injure you. You have within yourself the most complete armour: do not withdraw from the combat.

Farewell, Monsieur, accept the assurance of my kindest feelings.

C. DE V.

Letter 15. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday afternoon, 2 June,* 1845 (3 o'clock)

MADAME

Kindly deign to accept, on the occasion of your fête,† the enclosed little composition of the last few days, which the first morning passed out of my bed has happily completed. Besides the public purpose, of which I speak at the beginning, real and important though that is in my eyes, you will not doubt, I think, that my heart was secretly incited by the pleasure of occupying myself with you, and the innocent hope of agreeably surprising you. Without in the least having sought any reaction on myself, this slight work has, all the same, produced upon me a very salutary effect, by naturally bringing about a return, under an impulse of affection, to my habitual meditations, through the only intense application of mind which was then possible to me, inasmuch as it related to you.

This composition offers you also a first example of the close connection that I hope little by little to establish, by means of our precious friendship, between the flight of my highest thoughts and that of my purest feelings. This happy relation was doubtless in a general way brought to your notice in my fatal letter of the 17th of May: but it was there spoiled by being too much mixed with the transient follies which have so justly alarmed you. The present occasion will attract your special attention, in a simpler and more direct way, to this important correlation, henceforward as favourable to the improvement of my public life, as it will be to the happiness of my private life.

I must, Madame, carefully profit by a day which inclines you to greater indulgence, to beg once more for your full pardon on account of the wrongs, serious though involuntary, that I have recently inflicted upon you. These I will constantly strive to make you forget, though I made amends for them almost as soon as they were committed. Perhaps I may now even congratulate myself on not having been able to go to your relatives' house on Friday. It will make our first interview on Wednesday evening all the more delightful, thus taking place under the auspicious patronage of Saint Clotilde. May the pure memory of this replace

* Image of 2 June, 1845.—*Ed.*† The day of St. Clotilde in the Catholic Calendar.—*Ed.*

in the future that of the previous storm ! It will mark naturally the true point of departure of regular peaceful relations, which will always be worthy, I am well assured, of such a beginning.

Your devoted friend

A^{te} COMTE

Though the philosophic epistle was destined for yourself alone, it is written in such a manner that there can be no objection to your giving it any publicity you wish. I approve, beforehand, all you may propose to do with regard to it.

During the long visit that your excellent brother was good enough to make me yesterday, I heard with sorrow that your nervous cough had become distinctly worse ; I hear it now from here, and I fear that I have only too much contributed to it by the painful disturbance of feeling that I have had the misfortune to cause you during the last fortnight.*

Letter 16. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 5 June, 1845

You have given me a proof of your esteem, Monsieur Comte, I hope you will find the like from me in what I am going to tell you of myself.

I should not have believed it possible to add anything to what I have suffered for some time past, but I have just seen that one can feel the reaction of the troubles of others at the same time that one bears one's own. My heart is as it were mutilated, and when I told you that I asked myself every evening if I should have the courage to pass the next day in this world, it is literally true. In the name of the interest I feel towards you, I beg of you, try to overcome an inclination which will make you miserable. Love without hope kills both body and soul : it mows one down like a blade of grass. For two years I have loved a man from whom I am separated by a double obstacle. I have tried in vain to change this fatal sentiment into maternal feeling, sisterly tenderness or devotion : it has conquered me under every form. It is only since I had the courage to get away that I have felt able to live. Now I must have quiet along with some occupation.

* Auguste Comte's Philosophic Epistle on Social Commemoration was enclosed in this letter. See p. 305.

What little strength I have I employ in work which may prove of some use to me ; I want to think of nothing else now. Let me retain your friendship, and be assured that I value your heart at its full worth. But mine is, I may say, blighted. It must get back strength at the springs of resignation and solitude. I wish you not to come to see me here* ; let us spare each other emotions which can only be disastrous to both. Have all the armour of manliness ready for this combat, Monsieur Comte ; a woman has none but her heart, and none the less she has to win the fight.

If, as I like to think, you have understood and appreciated me, you will find in the sad story I confide to you a sincere proof of interest and esteem ; certain compromises of conscience are sanctioned, but to me they are impenetrable mysteries : to the end of my life I shall not understand them.

Farewell, Monsieur, I hold out my hand to you most sincerely, and I have the kindest of feelings for you.

C. DE VAUX

Letter 17. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 6 June, 1845 (9 o'clock)

I shall have the courage, Madame, to thank you from my heart for your painful confidence, and to prove to you with sincerity how much your beautiful letter of yesterday confirms my opinion of the rare nobility of your nature. Doubtless it would have been preferable if this decisive declaration had followed at once upon the fatal explosion of my unhappy feelings, which could not then have become so deeply rooted. But could I blame this delay of fifteen or twenty days, when I think of the violent effort that such an avowal must have cost you, and think besides that the very vivacity of my emotions might have made you fear to speak earlier ? However this may be, I hope the remedy is still in time to stem the course of an affection which might have gone on so far as to threaten the wreck of everything in me, of everything even to my reason. Believe then, that as you expected, I shall always see a great proof of esteem and attachment in this cruel but indispensable operation, which, I hope, will be efficacious. I can only reply to it to-day by an equally frank communication.

The very difference in our ages was alone enough to keep a man, with so few personal advantages as myself, from expecting tender love. But I was happy in the belief that your heart was really free, though it seemed determined always to continue so. Therefore, in trying very loyally for more than a fortnight to restrain my feelings within the limits that you would approve, I only considered myself bound to concentrate them, and to restrain their expression, reserving them secretly for a free expansion at some future time, should this ever cease to displease you. Now, alas ! it means much more than this. For your sake and mine I must to the best of my power extinguish even from its very origin the only real love that I have ever experienced, and certainly after this cruel trial, you may imagine with what care I shall now avoid any similar attack ! For you at least, you have appreciated my heart, and not only my mind.

In pointing out to you the day before yesterday, the innocent artifice by means of which my precious Italian songs procure me a helpful expansion for my various solitary emotions, I hardly expected so soon to be reduced to the saddest among them, and especially to that heart-rending air from *I Puritani*, admirable for its truth and simplicity : ' O cangia il mio fato, o cangia il mio cor ! ' Ah ! no one, perhaps not even its melancholy author, can have ever sung, as I have done, anything so well suited to my sad and hopeless situation.

Nevertheless, Madame, however deep be my regret, I could not reproach you with anything, and the rare nobility of your conduct has gained for you a lasting friendship that you seem already to appreciate at its true value. It could not have effectually replaced the stronger feeling if you had accepted another love after having declined mine, or if the state of your heart had only been guessed by my own observations afterwards. But, as it is, your affectionate loyalty, overcoming an only too natural hesitation, has at once determined you to entrust me with your complete confidence without my having in any way solicited it ; besides, the evident priority of your previous attachment spares me the pain of seeing another preferred to me ; so that I have only that of deploring my sad fate ! Be assured then, Madame, that I shall really succeed in conquering myself, or rather in radically transforming myself, for I do not give up, any more than you do, the idea of a valuable friendship, of which you are by no means rendered less worthy through your having unveiled to me all the

extent of your misfortune. The philosophy so dear to me, which does not lose itself in vain words, is quite capable of inspiring resignation or activity as the case may require ; it can preserve me from all useless fighting against obstacles which are evidently insurmountable. However hard this trial may be, you will acknowledge, I hope, that I have worthily submitted to it.

You will have heard from your brother, and, besides, I myself frankly avowed to the public three years ago, on finishing my fundamental work, to what a terrible degree my cerebral trouble was excited by the fatal conjunction of moral emotions with intellectual efforts ; yes, I will have the courage to tell you, I was insane during the greater part of the year 1826, at the age of 28 years. As full confidence on my part should be returned for yours, I will complete this information with an avowal with which I have never trusted my most intimate friends : during my convalescence from this horrible malady, I was, against my will, rescued from the Seine ! But the very fact that I can be now so entirely and directly open without undue excitement ought to dissipate the anxiety which all you now know of my past might cause you. Doubtless the crisis in which I have been plunged for the last three weeks was aggravated in my eyes by the involuntary feeling of its actual analogy with that frightful episode. Still, no one knows better than myself how much the two cases differ in intensity : the continual anxiety which such a recollection must cause me also constitutes a sufficient guarantee against a return hardly consistent with my present knowledge, even if my actual maturity should permit the possibility of it.

I hope that by means of these melancholy details your friendship will be reassured as to what might be the consequences of the cruel shock that you have had to give me. I must return, as on so many other previous occasions, to seek in my public life the noble though imperfect compensation for the undeserved misfortunes of my private life. May Humanity profit by this great and inevitable sacrifice ! I must in future redouble my love for her. The past certainly teaches me that she was never ungrateful ; but alas ! she will only give me her holy and everlasting affection after I have ceased to be able to enjoy this ineffable consolation, which it is not given anyone to partake except by an ideal anticipation.

Your repose is at least as important to me as my own ; I shall respect, Madame, your natural desire to avoid for the present any

private interviews. Though I do not recognise as much as you, the real wisdom of this precaution, a true susceptibility prevents me, at present, from going to your house until you of yourself express a wish to see me. But do not forget, I beg of you, in the name of our lasting friendship, that nothing has so much power over me as confidence: if this measure were too prolonged, it would certainly become more injurious than prudent. During this transition I propose to spend all Wednesday and Friday evenings, when I am free, at the house of your kind relatives, so often as I can without the risk of making myself an annoyance to the worthy family, of which it would be so sweet to me to become part by any title, to supply what has always been wanting to me in this respect. I hope that, with such surroundings, you will not avoid my presence; by seeing you, I feel sure, my painful transformation will be facilitated.

Looking forward to the time when we shall be able to renew more satisfactory communications without danger, allow me, Clotilde (if on Monday I worthily won the permission to address you in this sweet way, at once fraternal and paternal), to begin from that day the pure office of a true friend by finishing this painful letter with some remarks on your literary career, which, though necessarily severe in character, will be tempered by deep affection. In all other respects, I would be your elder brother: but under this special aspect, I can and I ought to become your spiritual father, as I have been your noble brother's. Do not hinder me from working at your improvement, now the only way in which I can occupy myself with your happiness, which will always be so dear to me, in whatever degree, or under whatever form I may be able to contribute to it.

The natural imperfection of your first sketch did not prevent me from perceiving the evident germ of a true literary talent, of which I have since obtained such decisive proofs in these admirable letters which cost me so much. In thus seeking from public life a noble diversion from the sorrows of private life, be careful, Clotilde, not to develop your talent at the expense of the truth of your ideas and the purity of your feelings, by both of which attributes you are as yet so markedly distinguished from all the race of blue-stockings. Be careful never to allow what should be the result only of spontaneous inspiration to degenerate into a mere profession: may you never be drawn into the strange and dangerous vortex which may

perhaps surround you! Above all, my dear friend, I would advise you to hold on to true social principles: leave to the vulgar herd of writers the too easy task of destroying a weak public morality in the interest of some private affection. I do not pretend to erect myself as a type, but I can cite myself as an example of what may be the result of following out my general precepts. If, as I presume, I shall some day tell you the story of all my life, you will know how generous I have been, and the recognition my conduct has met with: you will then feel that no one would have more reason than myself for personally wishing for divorce; still, you know that no one of our contemporaries has more energetically reprobated this disastrous aberration. Humanity is in travail for total regeneration. may you have the noble ambition to second her worthily, instead of blindly hindering her. There would now be more honour as well as more literary repute in defending the really fundamental ideas concerning family life, than in employing among the present crowd of vulgar, stupid, or culpable agitators, in their attack upon the elementary bases of society, whatever talents one possesses. Of course you will never write but in accordance with your convictions; but beware of the too natural error which leads us, under present conditions, to take mere personal inclinations for true social convictions, which are not usually met with, especially in your sex, in these times of mental and moral anarchy. Your happiness is no less at stake than your honour in avoiding this fatal illusion that I point out to you at this early date.

Farewell, my noble sister; I accept with sincerity the hand you offer me. Let us both hope for a better relationship between us. For this I shall strive to prepare with courage worthy of the calm friendship for which you still allow me to look, at the end of so many storms.

Yours sincerely

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 18. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday, 23 June, 1845 (noon)

MY DEAR FRIEND

I cannot resist the wish I feel to thank you at once for the sweet tears which were called forth by the charming novel,* about

* *Lucie*, by Clotilde de Vaux.—*Ed.*

which I reproached you for not having given me the pleasure of seeing it prior to its publication. Both its sentiments and ideas appeared to me equally worthy of you, so much so that I did not even notice the printer's errors with which you were so much concerned on Friday. It is very sweet to me, I assure you, to be able to congratulate you so sincerely in all respects on such a beginning. Without making me regret the affectionate counsel in my last letter concerning the whole of your literary career, this first work shows me how much your own disposition is naturally in accord with my friendly wishes, above all with regard to the scrupulous respect you continue to evince for true social principles.

You begin to understand the constantly relative spirit of my philosophy, and the radical repugnance to all strictly absolute rules, so that you can sufficiently feel already that, whilst my system condemns divorce, I certainly could not extend the normal indissolubility of marriage to the extreme case that you have so well depicted ; indeed, during the Middle Age, when Catholicism was at its highest point of social ascendancy, its doctrines allowed a special exemption to meet the case. In the same way in another instance, whilst admitting the indispensable precept constantly to respect the truth—a wholesome morality does not at all interfere with our excusing, or even praising, in exceptional cases, certain particular untruths.

In all these anomalies, positive morality will show itself distinctly superior to theological morality, as the relative nature of the former will more easily allow of its adaptation to exceptional modifications, without impairing the necessary inflexibility of its main principles. If you know, as I presume you do, Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, you will have noticed how the author has appreciated the fatal impossibility, in which Jeanie Deans was placed by the purely religious* character of her moral convictions, of making, without exposing herself to total demoralisation, the false declaration which would immediately have preserved her sister from a barbarous legal procedure. A rational education would have authorised this pious lie, at the same time leaving intact the habit of truth.

Farewell, and once more thank you ; I hope to see you to-morrow evening.

Yours sincerely

A^{te} COMTE

* *i.e.* Theological. — *Ed.*

Letter 19. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday evening, 23 June, 1845

I was just going to take up my pen to tell you of all the little pieces of good fortune that have befallen me, when I received your kind letter, Monsieur. The *National* has made me a handsome present in return for the unfortunate *Lucie*: and I hope that her younger brother will be as well received. My success is a double pleasure to me, as my relatives are not rich, and are very kind.

I thank you sincerely, Monsieur Comte, for having so heartily taken part in my joy. The *National* has blamed me much for treating the great subject in question so cursorily; but I wished to go on as my small strength permitted; practice will come to my aid in the future.

I hope to see you on Wednesday, as you propose, Monsieur. I like to think that you are well now, and that you are as happy as one can be in this poor world (be it said without prejudice to philosophy).

Pray receive the assurance of my best feelings.

CLOTILDE DE V.

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Letter 20. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday morning, 25 June, 1845

We have now arrived at the critical moment, Monsieur. My sister-in-law has been suffering since five o'clock yesterday evening; the doctor fears it will not be over this morning. We do not wish to run the risk of your finding us all upset this evening. Let us hope that we number one more on Friday, and that you will come to congratulate us on the event.

Pray receive the renewed and constant assurance of regard from us all.

C. DE VAUX

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Letter 21. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday evening, 25 June, 1845 (6 o'clock)

In such a great crisis, which must make writing difficult, I am much touched, my dear friend, with your promptness in announcing to me what I have been anticipating with hope mingled with anxiety. In order to have news without inconveniencing

you further, I send my servant to obtain, as she is very capable of doing, exact information as to the condition of the interesting mother, prematurely exposed to a terrible experience, of which her affectionate husband and family anxiously await the issue. I hope no unfortunate event may hinder me from soon repeating the words of the gospel: 'Unto us a child is born.'

I am already feeling the effects of the holy engagement that I have accepted, in which I am so happy as to be associated with you. Both of us deprived of posterity, we cannot, with hearts like ours, see a mere matter of form in this sort of voluntary paternity, of which I feel myself ready to fulfil all the touching duties, however far they may extend. If your relationship to the child already forms a special attraction to you, I myself am drawn to it, perhaps not the less forcibly by the need of domestic emotions, of which I have been too long deprived in every way; while you, at least, in the midst of your deep afflictions, have happily always found the inestimable consolation that an excellent family procures. Kiss our common godchild then affectionately in my name, as soon as you see him.

My servant's very tried experience leads me to think that she may be useful in helping you at such a moment, when you have only an inexperienced one at your command. I do not hesitate, then, in begging you all to make use of her, at any hour of the day or night, as if she were directly in your service. Keep her, if you think proper, even from to-night. Sophie, to whom I spoke of this mission, will undertake it very willingly, not only out of devotion to me, but also from the immediate sympathy that such a situation must inspire in every worthy mother of a family, still more towards persons that she has already learnt to respect.

If you do not keep her this evening, I will send her back to-morrow with the same intention, as well as to obtain fresh information in a case in which my heart is so much interested.

The very devoted friend of all of you

A^{te} COMTE

In case it be a boy, I would remind you that I have decided on the names Paul—Auguste—Charles: the choice falls to you if it be a girl.

P.S.—Notwithstanding the urgency and gravity of the case, I cannot refrain from offering you renewed thanks on your touching

Lucie, the second reading of which, this morning, charmed me still more than the first, the day before yesterday. I reserve to a more convenient time the special congratulations deserved by the truly admirable phrase in which you have so worthily characterised the true social condition of women, according to the philosophical principle established, without your knowledge, by my work, though I had not the opportunity to bring it so distinctly forward. These ideas and feelings make me recognise with delight, how you are for ever preserved, my noble friend, from the fatal aberrations that the present anarchy borrows from the old Greek metaphysics on this fundamental subject.

In case you may be able to amuse yourself, I hand over to Sophie the four volumes that I should have had the pleasure of bringing you this evening. The first volume of *Gall* is for your excellent mother.

Letter 22. From AUGUSTE CONTE

Thursday morning, 3 *July*, 1845 (6 o'clock).

Yesterday evening I was not able, my dear friend, even during our delightful walk,* to find opportunity for telling you adequately of the deep impression that a third reading of your admirable *Lucie* has produced upon me. It was only then that I conceived the painful idea, which perhaps ought to have come earlier, of which I must now speak to you. Although several of the principal circumstances of this touching story evidently could not apply to you, I fear, at the same time, that the great domestic misfortune of *Lucie* depicts essentially the fatal situation of Clotilde. If it is so, I desire by this opportunity to spare you the pain of a direct avowal of a fact, from which all the same our friendship could not suffer any serious change: simple silence on your part will be sufficient to confirm my sad conjecture, if any more direct avowal be repugnant to you. If this only too probable supposition be true, be quite sure, my dear friend, that you have not in any way offended me by preserving towards me until now a silence so natural on this subject. By having honoured me with an explanation more difficult because more personal in character, you have prevented me beforehand from supposing that your present reserve was occasioned by a want of confidence in me.

* Image of 2 *July*, 1845.—*Ed.*

What I have most at heart now, in case my surmise is only too surely grounded on truth, is to convince you specially, my noble friend, that this painful discovery renders both deeper and purer the attachment with which you have inspired me, in adding to it henceforward the obligation to pay my share of the unquestionable debt that the whole of society has morally contracted towards you. Without in the least pretending to realise the ideal of your brilliant Maurice, I shall always venture to rival even him in the fulness and constancy of my devotion, rendered more praiseworthy through the knowledge which your eminent loyalty has spontaneously given me of the real state of your heart. Allow me now to characterise the sum of my feelings, with the aid of a more admissible supposition, in declaring to you now, with perfect sincerity, that if some day I should once more become free, I am resolved never to take anyone but yourself for my wife, remaining always unmarried if you should refuse me. Under present circumstances, then, my heart sees in you now a true friend, and, in my dreams of the future a worthy spouse. Under one aspect or the other you will judge me, I hope, to have sufficiently attained to the lasting purity that you have always enjoined on me, which should now dissipate in you every former impression of pain or alarm.

Farewell, my very dear Lucie, for you will allow me, perhaps, sometimes to call you by this sweet name, which will in future mean so much for both of us.

Ever yours sincerely

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 23. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 3 July, 1845

MONSIEUR

I wish I were able to reply more definitely to your letter of this morning. I have re-read it several times, in order to try to penetrate the sentiments which have influenced you. I find in it again, as in all that comes to me from you, the signs of true affection, but I find it absolutely impossible to understand you (excuse the straightforwardness of my avowal). I have a great esteem for you, and am sincerely attached to you, and if I should find myself at any time under the necessity of asking any favour whatever, I think I should with confidence turn to you. In the same

way I should have the greatest pleasure in giving you positive proofs of my interest in you. But there is nothing mysterious in my situation, and I have nothing more to confide to you than what I have already told you.

My need and love of independence make the little sacrifices imposed upon me by the limited means of my family very little deserving of merit. I hope to succeed in creating for myself a source of income ; this is all my ambition for the present and future.

As to the state of my heart, allow me not to think of it myself. I shall always be your friend, if you wish, but I shall never be more than that. Consider me as an engaged woman, and be well assured that along with my grief I have room for deep affections.

I told you at the beginning of our acquaintance that I wish you to give yourself neither pain nor perturbation on my account. No one can sympathise more than I do, with the storms of the heart ; but they have wrecked me, and I am unable to do anything for them.

I really must ask you, Monsieur, to excuse my sending you such a confused scrawl. But, as a false or a double life would be impossible for me, I have tried, as best I can, to clear up your doubts about me.

I hold out my hand to you most sincerely ; I have a tender regard for you, and I shall always be pleased to make our intercourse afford you all the happiness I am able to give.

Yours cordially

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 24. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday afternoon, 4 July, 1845 (3 o'clock)

MY DEAR FRIEND

I feel I must thank you immediately for the affectionate letter that I have just read several times. It is very precious to me for many reasons. In learning thus that your own situation has no sorrowful mystery like the domestic tragedy you have attributed to your admirable *Lucie*, I cannot regret the expressions of a particular and respectful sympathy that my erroneous conjecture inspired in me yesterday. My error, too natural not to be excusable, has at least allowed me, without incurring your blame, to give proofs of the depth and purity of my eternal

affection. I accept with respectful gratitude the holy friendship, the constant assurance of which you are so kind as to renew, and I feel how important it is to the happiness of my whole life, notwithstanding your irrevocable resolution that it can never be more than a sweet fraternity. Resigned henceforward always to be contented with what you wish to grant me, fear no more, dear Clotilde, any indiscreet solicitations. Would it have been possible for me, six months ago, to hope at any time, even for this limited happiness? It is for me, besides, to regulate my own feelings as far as I can, without ever murmuring against the involuntary restrictions, which, as you very justly remark, do not make great affection impossible. It is always so sweet to love, whatever may be the manner and degree of reciprocity! Let us hope then, my Clotilde, that this sincere fraternal affection may beautify all the remainder of our private life, at the same time it will make more perfect, I am sure, the whole of our public life. You cannot imagine with what happiness I have just read the candid straightforward manifestation of your adorable readiness to count on my entire devotion in whatever may happen that may require my intervention. Should it be counsel, action or sacrifice, or any other service whatever, I am happy and proud that you now know me well enough to look to me first, and I shall always think myself sufficiently rewarded by your sisterly confidence.

Ever yours sincerely

A^{te} COMTE

I send this hurried reply by my accustomed messenger, so that you may have read it before our sweet interview in presence of your family.

Letter 25. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday morning, 19 July, 1845 (6 o'clock)

There was no time yesterday evening* my dear friend, while we were alone, to consult with you, as I wished to do, on a little personal matter, about which I should like to have your candid opinion.

Now that your sister-in-law's health is fully re-established, and that she can go out freely, I fear that my regular visits may

* Image of 18 July, 1845.—*Ed.*

soon seem too frequent. Although I am happy to see that your brother and she begin to have enough confidence in my affection not to put themselves out of the way on my account, still my presence may keep them in, sometimes against their wishes : I do not speak of your admirable mother, who is as sensible as she is kind. Continuing my visits on Mondays and Fridays, perhaps it will be better in future not to come on Wednesdays, notwithstanding the pain I should feel at seeing you less frequently. Besides my general repugnance ever to feel myself obtrusive, a special delicacy should here impose on me this new reserve, when I think for whose sake especially I come so often. I beg of you, who can do it so well, to endeavour to find out, with your invariable tact, the real feelings of our kind friends on the subject, so as to give me a confidential hint which will be most useful in settling my doubts either way. Farewell my dearest Clotilde, hoping to see you on Monday.

Ever yours

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 26. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday, 19 July, 1845

MY VERY DEAR SIR

Now that we can help each other without tormenting each other, you will find me always ready to conform to your wishes. I will not make any polite phrases or compliments on the subject of your visits to the rue Pavée. My family likes and esteems you much, and treats you as a man of intelligence and honour. Come then, as you propose, on Mondays and Fridays, and I will pay you a friendly visit once a week, when I can. I keep my own home for my study ; I have refused several visits on this account, and it is better so. Besides, I have need of all my time here to get through very little. Things being so arranged, you see that they are not to your disadvantage, since you are so kind as to value my company. I have always liked the company of superior men ; one may gain so much from them.

Farewell, my worthy friend, receive the assurance of my kind feelings.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 27. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 20 *July*, 1845 (7 o'clock)

How can I, my very dear friend, worthily acknowledge your charming reply to my last letter, written with so much affectionate earnestness! In giving up for the future the Wednesday visits, when I also saw you, so as not to inconvenience our kind friends, my sacrifice was entire and without any hope of the compensation which your generous sympathy has prompted you to make me, by your kind promise of the much greater pleasure of a weekly visit from you on that day. Still, however precious this adorable resolution is to me, I attach, indirectly, still greater value to its enabling me to see in it the happy and decisive symptom of the entire cessation of that systematic distrust, at first justly inspired by my former rashness, but since protracted perhaps longer than was deserved. After having gone through so many painful phases, our pure affection has at last attained its true and permanent condition, in which I also expect the full re-establishment of returning health, by the decisive termination of my two months' nervous crisis. Besides, such an issue will also, in due time, spontaneously put an end to several little practices of no special importance except as daily signs of a temporary *régime* of systematic precaution; for instance, the dearest hand of your family will no longer be the only one which refuses mine when I come in or go out. As regards the more important question of access to your study, I hope that, at least under the title of colleague, I shall sometimes be admitted, according to your former concession. But whilst wishing to see removed a temporary prohibition which had its origin in suspicion, I acknowledge with you that the entrance to this sanctuary could not, without considerable inconvenience, be open to me as often as your own delicious plan will allow.

Farewell, my Clotilde; a thousand thanks: hoping to see you to-morrow.

Yours ever

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 28. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday, 20 *July*, 1845

Yesterday I had important and happy news to announce to my friends: I was looking forward with special pleasure to tell you

of it, Monsieur. To-day, we are threatened with a cruel event : the poor little new baby has been since midnight at the point of death. Now, however, the alarming crisis seems to have passed away, but he cannot digest even a teaspoonful of syrup. The doctor begins to think he will be able to save him. But how much management it will require to get his little internal arrangements into proper working order ! The mother is much depressed : may God or some good genius protect her, and preserve her from the worst !

My own news was brighter, and everybody here received it with kindness. The *National* offers me regular employment. Every Monday or Wednesday the literary section is to be devoted to a review of everything written and published on the subject of education, both secular and religious, and especially on the education of women. They wish to join to it critiques on stories written by women, and they propose to send them to me to be examined. Monsieur Marrast's offer is made with great kindness and interest, and I hope very much to succeed, in order to get on the staff of some journal or other. I have thought that I might make use of your kind help for my début, Monsieur Comte. You who understand so well the silliness and defects of religious education, might perhaps supply me with good weapons. I shall make my first article from my own recollection of the abuses of educational establishments.

The upper portion of my body is better, but the lower always remains shaky.

Thank you for your kind acknowledgment of something I am doing quite naturally and with pleasure. I only regret that you should speak to me of mistrust and of all that is past. I have never mistrusted any man. A woman always inspires pretty nearly the feelings that she wishes to inspire. If I reserve my solitude for myself it is because so few hours a day are open to me, and during this time I am occupied, or nursing myself.

Farewell, dear Monsieur ; I do not know how it will be with us to morrow ; I hope, however, that it will be better.

Allow me to assure you once more of my affection.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 29. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 22 *July*. 1845 (5 o'clock)

After having sincerely shared in your very natural joy yesterday on the happy change of prospects in your material circumstances, allow me, my dear friend, to offer you to-day some affectionate reflections on the nature and character of the weekly work which is to procure you such a valuable result. It is especially through remarks of such a general character that I can become really useful to you, if not immediately, at least with regard to your career as a whole. You know, too, that such remarks will never in any way affect any special information you may want of me, with regard to which I shall always be ready at any time to talk with you, when and in what manner you please, although on many such points you are as well or better informed than myself, at least, with reference to the education of women, which forms at present your immediate subject.

Since a literary career seems now about to open to you, I must give my best attention, with the aid of a sound philosophy, to prevent as much as possible such a means of livelihood from radically impairing the intellectual and moral worth of your character. Not only to keep this intact, but also to give it due chance of development, must be our main object. Now, it is abundantly clear that at the present time this profession often exercises a disastrous influence, and with all the more danger because its first aspect appears so seductive. I need only allude, as a secondary point, to the weariness and loss of time that periodical compositions necessarily entail when they are deprived of all serious purpose. What I have more especially in view is the radical degeneration, both mental and moral, which nearly always results from the exclusively critical habits inherent in the journalism of to-day, tending as they commonly do to develop a caustic and superficial disposition, already too common in our anarchical *milieu*, and frequently ending by stifling all the essential germs of true greatness. You can observe at your leisure a very striking example of this in Marrast himself, who, notwithstanding his education of a nature too literary, was certainly endowed, not only with great brain-power, but with eminent sagacity, combined with remarkable accuracy; and yet he will not leave any lasting record, through this deplorable journalistic asphyxia, which has finally rendered him incapable

of any profound or sustained work, in the absence of which no important results can be looked for. Though it is difficult in the profession upon which you are just entering to avoid such a danger, yet it is possible to do so if, after having thoroughly appreciated its imminence, you make use of the determined disposition inherent in the natural elevation of your character; as you are, I am sure, fully decided never to appear in the crowd of writers whose activity is at present far more injurious than useful to the general evolution of Humanity. Without such a constant corrective this proposed means of livelihood would certainly not be as desirable for your intellectual and moral development as many of the other ordinary resources which have not unreasonably appeared distasteful to you.

Although Monsieur Marrast must be thanked for his praiseworthy kindness, it would seem to me to have been better directed if he had granted to your judgment and talent all the confidence that your remarkable *début* deserved: that is to say, if he had contented himself, without limiting you in any way, with placing three or four literary articles a month at your disposal, or rather by engaging himself beforehand to insert all that you could produce, as he must be well aware that you are incapable of abusing such a confidence or even of stretching it unduly. Instead of evincing this liberal arrangement, he has already thought fit to fix the general limits of your work, and he will perhaps later on extend his supervision more closely, unless such details become tiresome to him, as we must hope. His choice, I must confess, does not seem to me happy. The most judicious part of his offer really consists in that which was mentioned as purely accessory, and this I should much like to see, if possible, made little by little, the principal. I refer to the periodical critiques of novels by women, for, indeed, such an occupation would exactly suit you. In a function so proper to you, you would always find or devise means for bringing forward incidentally different points of interest, even including education, without being tied down to any responsibility, since the fundamental subject of all such books is always, as Fielding so aptly says, the whole of human nature, individual and social, as it actually exists. Weekly work of this nature, far from injuring the future development of your personal productions, would certainly tend, under good guidance, to facilitate and perfect it, at least if too much time were not devoted

to it. The only inconvenience that I can see for you in this is that you will naturally find yourself subject to the cajoleries and animosity of the race of blue-stockings, but as the nobility of your character and the superiority of your intelligence will, as a rule, place you above small critical passions which specially provoke both these dangers, you could I think, easily avoid, in your solitary life, these two scourges which, though they come from opposite quarters, are equally to be dreaded.

As to the main project, which consists in confiding to you a sort of agency for the criticism of education, at all events so far as concerns women; I cannot, after consideration, approve of it seriously. For whilst this employment seems hardly suitable for a lady, I almost think that any man of good judgment would decline to undertake it, since sufficiently fixed principles on this immense subject are wanting.

One of the consequences of the present spirit of journalism, so lacking in all true intellectual discipline, is a reckless attempt to deal with all subjects of interest alike, with as little discernment as exists in the ordinary conversation of the usual run of men: that is to say, hardly ever distinguishing between what is really accessible and what is premature or even chimerical—nor between what already admits to some extent of the intervention of the daily press, and what should still belong for some time at least to systematic elaborations. To no subject is such a remark more applicable than to the great question of education. This has hitherto been inadequately or even improperly treated by the more serious works, and therefore cannot be ordinarily introduced into any papers, least of all into the daily press.

When we examine its basis, education, by its nature, is seen to constitute the principal application of any general system which deals with the spiritual government of Humanity. As no such system is at present really in force, the impossibility of any regular education is the consequence so long as this fatal interregnum lasts. Until then religious* education, although greatly behindhand, will alone remain coherent, notwithstanding its deplorable mental influence, and the nullity of its moral action. Of this the practical demoralisation of active life will be the result, as soon as the inevitable contact with the world has shaken the frail foundations of a faith wanting in reality. What is called

* *i.e.* Theological.—*Ed.*

secular education is only a sort of metaphysico-literary smattering, thinly varnished over here and there with science, applied on this old theological foundation, of which it modifies somewhat the intellectual character, but at the expense of its moral tendency. So the regeneration of public or private education can only be seriously considered when a new philosophy has sufficiently established a true and durable systematisation of human conceptions. I, who have consecrated my life to this fundamental work, should still, for the present, even for myself, regard as premature the immediate elaboration of education. Although it is to be the special subject of one of my four works promised at the end of my great treatise, I shall only consider myself able to attempt it properly after completing the one with which I am now occupied. Mark with what deplorable thoughtlessness it is tried to introduce such subjects into the present field of journalism !

If then you consider education in its general progress, you will find all positive theory on the question naturally rests on this fundamental principle: *the education of the individual, be it spontaneous or more or less systematic, necessarily reproduces, in its great successive phases, the education of the race, as much with regard to feelings as to ideas.* Now, according to this incontestible rule no plan of complete education can be successfully thought out until the general evolution of Humanity has been sufficiently brought to a true historical theory. You see, then, how long we may have to hold our hand before these discussions can become reasonably suitable for journalism !

As every sound intelligence, then, must regard this most important subject as essentially premature, whether as to foundation or design, and as great efforts must now be concentrated upon the philosophical systematisation which must henceforth direct this immense elaboration, the only possible attraction at present in this subject would be limited to a mere criticism of the existing systems. Now, we may find such criticism, unconnected with any organic plan, or with utterly vague ideas of regeneration, which tends to much the same thing, already worked out in all essential points by our Voltairian predecessors. What attraction would you find in continuing to revolve in this exhausted circle, without at the same time being able to get out of it ? The only interesting point that remains on this subject would consist in connecting the whole of the antecedent critical effort with a just historic appreciation of the present situation : that is to say, in

establishing in detail what I have just indicated in principle, the impossibility of constituting any system of education without having first established a true and durable philosophy : all which goes to prove the necessity of turning one's forces towards this universal foundation. But to this important subject it would only be necessary to devote five or six decisive articles, and it would not admit being made the subject of weekly communications. Anything beyond this, and you are forced back upon the pure negativism of the last century. Leave, then, as soon as you can, all these vain and wearisome reproductions of a Voltairianism, which has become mechanical, to the strange teachings of the lady who was holding forth to us yesterday on the insipidity of domestic life.

Whilst explaining to you, my dear friend, the intrinsic frivolity of the principal proposal made to you, I do not in the least intend to produce in you any discouragement which might tend to weaken the fine personal capability which your task would enable you to show. In fact, my former experience of journalism enables me to tell you that all these ill-conceived projects of special periodical reviews crop up in it very easily, but are soon abandoned when a trial of them has shown their incoherence or their inopportuneness. I do not doubt this will soon happen with regard to the present project on education. Do not, then, put yourself to too great labour of any sort for a work which is not likely to be of long duration. For even if it should last, it would soon be felt that, seeing the deplorable fecundity of our feminine pens, the two departments that have been entrusted to you would mean an exorbitant amount of work for one even very active person, and they would eventually be separated, in which case I should strongly advise you to prefer the accessory to the principal, still keeping yourself to the critique of the novels. Marrast has wished, kindly and rightly, to concentrate on you the critique of all the feminine contributions to the *National* which can only really embrace books on education or novels. His intention was excellent, but he has made a curious mistake in its execution, so far as concerns education. Happily, you will have the opportunity of correcting this error by degrees, without giving any offence, by gradually tending to make of greater importance the work at first offered to you as accessory. Marrast has too much sense not to feel very soon that this change is quite in the right direction, both with

regard to the actual situation and as more in conformity with what is suitable to your own disposition, which I am confident will always be utterly opposed to discussions on educational systems.

What is necessary for you, is to obtain at once, under one form or another, the position of a regular contributor to this journal—and my friendship for you persists in rejoicing at this probability. However uncomfortable you may be at first, you will soon, quietly, be able to make yourself a position, permanent and properly suited to your temperament and habits. I hope that my free philosophical advice may be of use to you, by enabling you then to start with a true conception of your real literary standpoint. You know beforehand that I shall always be ready, during our friendly talks, to throw light upon, or develop, anything that may seem to you obscure or incomplete in this hurried first sketch.

Farewell, my dearest Clotilde, hoping to see you to-morrow.

Ever yours

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 30. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday, 30 July, 1845

DEAR MONSIEUR

I cannot give myself the pleasure of paying you a short visit during the next few days. I am at work on my article, and to that I am giving all my time and strength. In everything the beginning is always the difficulty, but I hope, that in this case at all events, it may prove '*il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte*.*' I will try to get over this first step creditably: after that, I shall return to pleasanter occupations. Accept this scrap of a note as a proof of remembrance, and of my sincere wish to be agreeable to you. I am looking forward to seeing you on Friday; I hope that you are well.

Farewell, Monsieur and dear friend,

Yours devotedly

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

* '*It is only the first step which costs,*'—*Ed.*

Letter 31. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday morning, 31 *July*, 1845 (7 o'clock)

It is not only to wait less impatiently for the pleasure of to-morrow evening that I hasten, my dear friend, to answer your kind note of yesterday. It reached me at the time that I was hoping to see you, for though I should not wish in any way to inconvenience you, I presume that when you have been able to give proper regularity to your delightful plan, I may usually count on you for Wednesday evenings, unless you send me word to the contrary. Your precious letter offers me compensation for the visit which it defers, and besides, your kind attention has prevented the uneasiness that such a privation would otherwise have caused me on the subject of your dear health. For both these reasons I owe you special thanks. No one can appreciate better than myself the motives which detained you, but I hope with you that the first effects of your new habits of work will not continue. They will, I presume, even make you feel the special need of this pleasant relaxation, during which your literary preoccupation might freely take its own spontaneous course, with or without my fraternal help.

By consecrating the greater part of yesterday to you, I was happily able to soften my privation. I had, as it happened, been present in the morning at an interesting marriage ceremony: and this charming operative function, which I had never before witnessed, would naturally of itself have excited my heart to every pure emotion. But you well know that I have no need of such stimulation to find pleasure in specially occupying myself with you.

As for my health, about which you are kind enough to enquire particularly, although much better than it was two months ago, it has not yet quite recovered its normal condition, the full return of which I was too hasty in announcing to you: for the last ten days my sleep has even diminished considerably, especially every other night, of which last night was an instance; my stomach, notwithstanding the water *régime*, cannot yet stand with impunity the least increase or change of diet. It is for this reason that I am going to prolong my complete rest for eight or ten days before again taking up the great work to which I must specially consecrate the vacation-time I now have. It is all the more important for me thus to make the most of it, as

when my official position is fully re-established next year, as I expect, that will put an end to this valuable and exceptional leisure.

Farewell, my dearest Clotilde, hoping to see you to-morrow evening.

Yours most devotedly

A^{te} COMTE

Sophie has come back bringing better news of our poor godson, who is at last, I hope, out of danger.

Letter 32. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 5 August, 1845 (noon)

Before resuming, after so long a time, the great composition that, three months ago, I was obliged to interrupt at its beginning, I feel, my very dear friend, the necessity of having a definitive explanation with you upon the true general character of this memorable crisis, destined to exercise such a fundamental influence over all the rest of my life, both public and private.

The intimate affection that I have had the happiness to conceive for you may be already regarded as having sufficiently undergone the proof of experience, since it has always become more deeply rooted as it has become purer. It seems to me to be now desirable to make you appreciate the eternal gratitude that I owe to you on this account, of which you could not otherwise form for yourself a just idea. Without first having satisfied this sweet general obligation, I could not worthily begin an elaboration in which the heart claims an equal share with the intelligence. At the same time, such an introduction should tend better to develop, by making it more marked, the lasting beneficial influence that you are thus called upon to exercise, perhaps without your knowledge, on the whole of this long work.

My public life was until now the source whence the consolations could spring enabling me to bear the habitual bitterness of my private life. Now, thanks to you, a happy reaction has taken place, by which, on the contrary, it will be my personal affections that will help to perfect my social activity. Such, my Clotilde, is the important explanation that I must put definitely before

you, once for all, by specially entreating your sympathetic attention to so difficult an explanation, which, though I endeavour to make it as simple as possible, may not become quite clear till it has been read more than once.

You know that I already felt intensely, though in a confused manner, this important relation, even from the beginning of our friendship, but the very circumstances under which this initial communication took place might dispose you then to see in it only an impassioned exaggeration ; at the most you have been able to confirm anew the celebrated general maxim of Vauvenargues on the necessary relation between the mental and moral growth. However, by the consecration to my *Saint Clotilde* of a delicious morning,* of which the effects have been so precious to me for many reasons, a morning to which will always be dated the regular course of our holy friendship, I soon gave you an affectionate proof of the depth to which this fundamental affection had penetrated into my character. None the less such an example could only prepare, without supplying, the mature explanation for which I now ask. Putting aside incontestable, but vague generalities, and specially bearing in mind the true character of my works, and even the present stage of their full development, I hope to enable you thoroughly to understand a truth of which I am myself deeply convinced, that this eternal affection, though at first sight seeming only destined to give charm to my private life, in the future must also have the effect of improving in marked degree my public career. In a word, the fundamental harmony of these two orders of existence, a harmony hitherto unattainable by me, has at last established itself on a durable basis, during these three exceptional and happy months in which the scrupulous nature of your friendship led you to fear that you had, on the contrary, disturbed the general course of my work, although involuntarily : it is of this that I am now anxious to convince you by means of shortly stating the facts relative to the two sides of my past life.

Naturally devoted, almost from boyhood, to pursue, with all my powers, the great social regeneration clearly indicated by my revolutionary precursors, I had the advantage of feeling with sufficient distinctness and sufficiently early, that this noble destination of my entire life required a thorough scientific preparation as an essential preliminary. After having completely

* The writing of the letter on 'Social Commemoration.'—*Ed.*

satisfied this difficult fundamental condition by a long continuance of efforts, both spontaneous and systematic,* I immediately directed my first individual publications towards the spiritual reorganisation of modern society as constituting the only solid basis of the real ulterior renovation of the political system properly so called. But the very course of this initial operation soon led me to recognise, twenty years ago, the fact that an attempt of this kind after social renovation would necessarily remain unfruitful as long as it did not rest first of all on a full abstract systematisation of all our real conceptions, so that the general intelligence would be submitted to the same gradual mental initiation which I myself had undergone.† With this I had until then believed the public could have essentially dispensed. Following such a conviction, I was obliged to suspend, almost at its beginning, my great political elaboration, to consecrate the first half of my public life to the foundation of a true philosophy, the indispensable basis of all subsequent renovation. The establishment of this essential connection brought on, in 1826, an intellectual crisis (with its horrible episode due to the fatal coincidence of moral suffering with mental strain) which led me to the general conception of the new philosophy, directly intended to impress at last on the nineteenth century a speculative character fitly distinct from that of the preceding century. Besides the immense mental difficulties inseparable from such a construction, the care of my health and various other hindrances, both at home and outside, arising from my peculiar situation, considerably prolonged the sufficient execution, first oral, then written, of this great preliminary undertaking, which, as perhaps you know, was only really finished three years ago. After having ended it, the natural plan of the whole of my public life brought me back to take up again, on this broad and solid basis, my original elaboration of social reorganisation. This, in fact, I immediately announced as directly constituting the necessary aim of the second part of my career, to be begun after a sufficient interval of repose and preparation. Such, then, was necessarily the general course of my philosophical evolution, perforce divided into two great epochs, one specially mental, where the social point of view only predominates as the principal

* This would seem to refer to our Master's early scientific studies.—*Ed.*

† See note on page 381 for a statement of our Master's later views on this point.—*Ed.*

source of abstract systematisation, the other primarily social, which has for its object the reconstruction of the moral life of Humanity on the basis of the doctrine already fully established.

The spiritual reorganisation of modern societies, in which my youth had seen one single operation, is necessarily broken up into two successive undertakings, which correspond with the two aspects, simultaneous but distinct, of our moral nature, according as our attention was directed to the systematisation of ideas or to that of sentiments, the two together constituting the indispensable preparation of a final systematisation of human actions. If I had persisted in systematising sentiments before ideas, my philosophic development, contrary to logical arrangement, would inevitably have taken a vague and even mystical character, and one in the end dangerous, as tending radically to prolong the present anarchy, instead of dissolving it. But now that the intellectual basis is properly laid, I must turn my principal powers directly towards the moral part of my great enterprise. Thus it is, dear friend, that I have at last succeeded, during these three months, that perhaps seemed to you to be lost for my work, in conceiving clearly the character that must deeply distinguish the second half of my philosophic life. In my fundamental work, the spirit of research and even of discussion had to prevail, in order to raise me gradually, according to the natural order of our diverse conceptions, to the true definitive point of view of human wisdom. Now that I am firmly established, it will only be a question of proceeding henceforward, according to the principles already admitted, to a social dogmatism, whose direct destination is before everything to systematise the essential feelings of our nature. In a word, I can now regard the intellectual superiority of Positivism as sufficiently acknowledged, at least among all leading thinkers; it remains for me then, in my second great work, to prove also its moral superiority, which is alone at present open to dispute.

Such, my dear Clotilde, is the only portion of the important explanation that I now give you, which it will ever be proper to publish. My intimate friends have already received the equivalent of this explanation, which I shall soon communicate to others, and one day perhaps to the public, but the whole of the explanation will necessarily always remain reserved for you alone, because it demands, to make it complete, a declaration only

compatible with a personal intimacy.* This short explanation of the true character proper to each of the two great divisions of my public life of itself points to a corresponding disposition in my private life, which, however, only admits from me of a simple secret confession.

At the beginning of my philosophical career, when I prematurely pursued an immediate moral reorganisation, I clearly perceived how much the growth of tender affections was necessary, not only to secure my personal happiness, but also to give full energy to my social action, and this deeply-rooted persuasion contributed largely to my fatal marriage. It was the imperfect satisfaction of such a need that specially constituted the painful character of the catastrophe of 1826, which, had I been fortunate enough at that time to have found a Clotilde, notwithstanding its gravity, would not have become more dangerous than the crisis, in reality very analogous, from which I am just recovering, improved in every way. At the same time, my principal philosophic efforts having been in their nature more intellectual than social during the period of nearly twelve years which followed the decisive shock, I should not have had cause (except for the loss of time and strength) to regret too much with regard to my public life, the sad blank inherent in my unhappy domestic situation. But starting from three years ago, my construction must, on the contrary, for the rest of my life have rather a moral than a mental character. For this reason the needs of my heart, which have shown themselves so energetic because they have never been adequately satisfied, must soon have acquired an irresistible preponderance. At the same time, by a happy coincidence, an indispensable separation, all the more irrevocable on my side, since I had not in any way provoked it, altogether relieved me of intolerable domestic difficulties, happily at last converted into a simple pecuniary charge, of which my nature prevents me from feeling the real weight. Indeed, the first two years of this new situation, during the natural interval between the end of my first great work and the beginning of the next, were mainly passed in enjoying a sort of negative happiness resulting to me from the un hoped-for calm succeeding to so long a time of daily agitation. It is only about a year since, that, on taking up my second main work, and gradually becoming

* By finally directing the publication of this correspondence, it will be seen that our Master's views on this point were subsequently changed.—*Ed.*

conscious of its true general character, I was necessarily made aware of the importance of a personal growth of the feelings, in accordance with the needs of a philosophical elaboration where the heart must henceforth play a greater part than the intellect. Moreover, the stimulus thus given by the nature of my public work proved spontaneously to be in perfect harmony with my own private impulses, which, after sufficient enjoyment of solitary rest, naturally impelled me towards social happiness, and produced a dread of isolation. Thus, my dear Clotilde, I was in two ways predisposed to social influences, so that unconsciously to you the development of our precious friendship was thoroughly opportune—despite any restrictions entailed by the previous state of your heart. Hence you can hardly now fail to understand that I am not under the influence of any passionate enthusiasm, when I persist to-day, as I did three months ago, in regarding the sweet sentiments which have now become habitual to me, as being henceforth indispensable to the perfecting of my public life as well as to my individual happiness.

To understand better the true general relation of the two crises, which begin and end the only part of my past, public or private, likely to be of direct interest to you, it may be useful to tell you about a sort of intermediate crisis, of a less pronounced character, but of the same nature, caused, in 1838, by the passage from the purely scientific first part of my great philosophical construction to the main sociological part which was to provide it with its definitive character. Although in this second and principal part of this long work, the social point of view had to remain above all scientific in character, and therefore could not tend to develop in me so powerfully the affective needs as the same point of view now does, still this epoch really forms a remarkable phase in so detailed a statement of the two parts of my life. The principle characteristic result of this crisis consisted in the thorough and permanent stimulation of my natural taste for the different fine arts, especially poetry and music, and I then became habitually much more susceptible to their enjoyment. You will see in this a natural affinity to my subsequent tendency towards a life where the affections had the larger share; and besides it had a very happy influence on the immediate improvement of my work in everything concerning the esthetic evolution of Humanity. From the personal point of view this epoch also presents some interest as being also intermediate between the two principal

crises ; for it was now that for the first time I abstained from again soliciting, though I did not disallow it, the termination of a temporary separation, and that I signified my firm resolution henceforth to make irrevocable the recurrence of any similar step.

Indeed, it is not perhaps superfluous to complete the understanding of these three personal crises, at the same time mental and moral, by pointing out also a singular material mark, which, though secondary, has helped me much in perpetuating, in a more decisive manner, the memory of each. One of my little philosophical secrets, which I wish to impart to you, consists in this general precept, of greater value than it appears at first sight : namely, that to consolidate and facilitate any intellectual or affective improvement, it is very important to unite to it some physical improvement, especially if it can be connected with the better conduct of daily life. It is from this principle that is in reality derived all that is essential in the positive theory of the sacraments, of which sacerdotal empiricism felt, in a confused manner, the bearing, as outward signs of our spiritual progress of whatever nature. On this account I may tell you that in my two-fold personal evolution the three crises which occurred in the years 1826, 1838, and 1845 are for me familiarly consecrated for the whole of my life by a special outward sign, as I have been led to mark each occasion respectively by a definitive abstention first from coffee, then from tobacco, and now from wine.

Such are, my dear friend, the different secret indications completing the more general part of my difficult explanation of the new character belonging to the second half of my career, from both public and private aspects. Those best acquainted with human nature are sure to surmise that one of the two portions of this analysis necessarily presupposes the other, but they will not be able really to determine it. They know, in fact, that one cannot profoundly act on the feelings of others without participating in them oneself, and that consequently, all future philosophic elaborations directly relative to the affective life demand from him who executes them a similar exaltation of soul. Having already become acquainted with all human conceptions, it is now necessary for me to experience all human feelings—even those of a painful character ; this is an irresistible and necessary preliminary to which all regenerators of Humanity are naturally subject. An habitual expansion of our principal emotions,

especially of those at once the most affecting and the sweetest, becomes then as indispensable now to my second, as my original intellectual preparation was to the first. I trust that by means of these indications you will be forced to abandon any real doubt on the happy philosophical effects that I anticipate from our eternal friendship.

My organism received from a most tender mother certain intimate chords of an eminently feminine nature, which have not yet vibrated sufficiently, because they have never been suitably touched. The time is at last come to develop their activity, which, not directly appreciable in the first volume of my next work, which is essentially logical in character, will strongly characterise the following part, and still more the fourth or last. It is to your salutary influence, my Clotilde, that I look for this inestimable amelioration, which should effectually put an end to the unjust aspersions of certain critics on the pretended want of proper unction in my style where only some exceptional souls have yet recognised the depth of underlying feeling, confessing to me that they have wept at certain philosophical passages which were, in fact, the very same that I had written in tears. To you alone I dare freely speak in anticipation of all the developments of which I have dreamed concerning the moral grandeur of man, now that you begin at last to feel how strange would be a friendship which would never allow of a confidential meeting in the absence of others. You alone can entirely dissipate a false intellectual shame of appearing too sensitive, because you will never suspect the purity and sincerity of my emotions, although they may at first sight appear to be working with undue vehemence. We must above all incorporate closely into Positivism, with radical improvements, all that the Catholic system of the middle ages was able to realise, or even to suggest, that is great or tender; the eminent superiority of your moral nature makes me assured that what remains in you of the Voltairian spirit will not prevent you from worthily sympathising with such attempts, when our sweet effusions of feeling have made you familiar with their tendency.

A celebrated writer (M. de Lamennais), who was already acquainted with my sad domestic experience, said of me, twenty years ago: 'His is a fine soul, that does not know what direction to take.' I hope now to have proved to him that I do know, if he has followed in good faith my whole development. But,

thanks to you, I trust to save him from retaining any real hesitation on this point. Nor should you fear, my noble friend, that your previous insufficient instruction deprives you of the power of sufficiently exercising on my behalf the invaluable assistance that I should vainly seek outside your admirable affection. Your own sad experience has spontaneously developed, in your rare intelligence, the most fundamental of all studies, that of human nature, which, even to the general student, is much more important for the realisation of such a philosophic influence than a pretentious scientific preparation. From this, even in the best it has to offer, namely, mathematical education, there issues too often at present the entire corruption of the proper influence of the reasoning faculties from the habit of sophistical quibbling, which results from an irrational tendency to employ deduction in place of observation.

This fundamental explanation, in which mind and heart have equally participated, is in itself very well suited to characterise the happy natural connection* with which I have wished to make you directly familiar, that it may serve as a basis for the valuable philosophic reaction that I expect to be the natural consequence of our friendship. I may make bold to say that I am approaching the execution of my work with the most pious intention of thoroughly grasping the different advantages of the bygone order, and of placing them upon a sufficient and permanent basis—always rendering sympathetic justice to all our predecessors whatever. For this there could be no better preparation than this secret dedication, when, whilst I testify to you a worthy gratitude for the useful improvement that I owe to you already, I place, henceforward, my direct growth in universal love under the sweet continual stimulus of our pure private attachment.

Your devoted friend

A^{te} COMTE

P.S.—My gratitude would seem to me incompletely expressed if, to this valuable permanent influence, I did not add here the indication of another favourable reaction, which, although transient, should be briefly pointed out to you. My affectionate devotion towards you has spontaneously enabled me to put aside the grave anxieties that my late material situation would surely have caused anyone else, and even myself, perhaps, to some extent,

* *i.e.*, Between the public and private careers.—*Ed.*

notwithstanding my ingrained habits of happy philosophical *insouciance*. Temporary embarrassments, consequent on the petty financial persecution with which our scientific coteries have honoured me, no longer offer any serious danger, though they are not yet altogether passed; but during the last few months they assumed an aspect menacing enough to disturb me if I had not been so delightfully preoccupied with you. Now, it is only just to myself to assure you, with regard to this, that thanks to my thoughts being so entirely diverted, my nervous crisis, which was really very serious, was not for a single moment troubled by any disturbing reflections on the difficulties which otherwise would have then seemed to me inevitable and close at hand. Accept now, my Clotilde, my special thanks for this.

Letter 33. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 7 August, 1845

DEAR AND KIND MONSIEUR

I was intending yesterday to take you my thanks for the parcel you so kindly sent me, but I was unable to get out, and I am also prevented from doing so to-day. Still, I do not wish you to be ignorant of the intention I had, nor of my gratitude. My only regret would be that you should have purchased the volume of Madame Sand, notwithstanding all the pleasure I have had in reading her eloquent refutation of herself. What a strange thing! and yet not very rare, this equal facility of speaking on both sides. Men like yourself are very rare in our times, and they were never more needed. I shall have great pleasure in trying to initiate myself, little by little, in the positive philosophy—Monsieur Littré's summary must be a convenient and sure key to it.

The little child was not quite so well yesterday. His intestines are, it seems, very delicate, and the utmost skill will be required to rear him: there is very little happiness in life without some alarm for it.

Farewell Monsieur, I hope to see you on Friday.* I must take my article to the *National* on that day. I hope I have treated the subject from their point of view. I have chosen that part of it which is the most interesting to me. Accept the expression of my very affectionate regards.

CLOTILDE DE V.

* Image of 8 August, 1845.—Ed.

Letter 34. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday, 11 August, 1845

DEAR MONSIEUR

I am obliged to go out this evening with my brother. I will come and spend an hour or two with you to-morrow to make up for my loss. I hope I shall not inconvenience you in calling on you about one o'clock.

I am not sure that I am not making you play somewhat the part of Providence towards me; but I know the delicacy of your kindness so well that I am going to ask you, as an intimate friend, to do me a small service. I am undergoing a treatment the expense of which is rather difficult to meet, but which I expect will do me great good; will you kindly lend me fifty francs for a few weeks?—this will help me to success in the *National*.

I am in a ferment of writing which is tiring, but yet gives me great pleasure. The *Letters to Marcia* have given me an idea which may be successful and interesting. It is to work out the story of a woman who had yielded to all the sophistries against marriage and social order, to make her strike on all the shoals of passion, still keeping her purity, and to bring her gradually towards peace and the fulness of family life. I think it would be a useful book, and at the same time convey a striking criticism. I am making the attempt, and I will let you know more about it.

Farewell, dear and worthy friend, you see that I appreciate you and that I trust you.

Rely on the heart of

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 35. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday afternoon, 11 August, 1845 (3 o'clock)

I hasten, dear friend, to express to you, however feebly, the joy with which your adorable letter of this morning has inspired me. In announcing to me that I shall be deprived of your society this evening, you are kind enough to assure me of a precious compensation for to-morrow. You need not doubt that you will be joyfully expected about one o'clock,* according to your friendly notice.

How much I thank you, my Clotilde, for your cordial reliance on me in your little material embarrassments! I shall be very

* Image of 12 August, 1845.—Ed.

happy to do you this little service to-morrow, but on condition that it be not so trifling; and, I may add, you must not fear its giving rise to the slightest indiscreet or unseemly presumption. You may depend upon it, that my position will never prevent my fraternal help to a much higher degree, if it become necessary; besides, you know that my own temporary difficulties are now practically over, thanks to the noble sympathy of some powerful philosophical adherents.

I learn with pleasure the project of a work that the reading of *Marcia* has suggested to you. Nothing could be more worthy both of your heart and mind. Your noble literary career is already sufficiently advanced for me to express the secret presage that I drew from your first efforts, the appreciation of which made me hope to find in you the woman destined worthily to repair the moral ravages which now result from the deplorable way in which a literary woman uses her fine talent. I should be only too happy, either by my encouragement or by my advice, to be able to help you a little in this admirable mission, where high fame is no less assured to you than the purest private satisfaction.

I feel sure that in the future—as I think I have already mentioned to you incidentally—our common renown will cause our holy friendship also to be brought, perhaps during our life-time and even contrary to our wish, into public notice. But thanks to the moral tone constantly shown in all our writings, the unanimous voice of the public will at once proclaim that this noble intimacy has done us honour and become a source of improvement to us both.

Farewell, my adorable friend; I look forward to seeing you to-morrow at one o'clock.

Yours ever, with all my heart

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 36. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 26 August, 1845 (6 o'clock)

Although my happiness of yesterday* will be renewed this evening,† I yield without scruple, my dear friend, to the pressing need of utilising my first moment's leisure, though it is very short and very much occupied, to acknowledge already the gratitude

* Image of 25 August, 1845.—Ed. † Image of 26 August, 1845.—Ed.

I specially feel for the development of the harmony, which becomes more and more perceptible between my affections and my work.

The sweet connection existing between these two I have from the beginning of our friendship shown you in principle, and I afterwards explained to you in some degree its theory, in the important though secret dedication that I have recently had the satisfaction to address to you before beginning my long elaboration. I may now add that every day brings home to me the fortunate proof of this charming reciprocal effect. For, every time that, for any reason, I suspend my work, your sweet form comes back to take possession of me, and, far from interfering with my subsequent meditations, it helps and enlivens them. It is when invoking you at your *altar** that I have more than once felt the rise of my best inspirations. And therefore I have already longed to be able to shed freely, at your feet, the delicious tears of gratitude and joy.

All my happy previsions on this subject then, are so far confirmed by the event, even beyond my hopes: and this precious effect will continue to grow as my work advances, being in full harmony with its true nature. Do not fear, then, my Clotilde, either any lukewarmness towards yourself on account of my philosophical preoccupation, or any disturbance of my work from the sweet emotions of my heart. Rather congratulate yourself upon what is certainly your due, namely, the constant and elevating agreement between my private and public life. Your personal influence becomes evident in it, when I compare my present sweet elaboration with the sad situation in which, six years ago, I treated the same subjects under another aspect.

Although this unquestionable confirmation should herein greatly strengthen my former explanations, I fear that you may still retain some material doubts. You will never suspect affectation in it, for this you know to be quite inconsistent with my character: but you will perhaps think that I have given myself up to a passionate illusion, the persistence wherein so constantly and under such different aspects would, however, be very strange.

* The chair occupied by Clotilde on the occasion of her visits. See Testament. p. 487.--Ed.

Still, as you have not yourself come under such an influence, you may perhaps hitherto have failed sufficiently to appreciate it, especially if your own experience has presented to you a serious conflict where I find a sweet co-operation. For this reason you will pardon me for so often returning to the subject of this connection—may I hope that you will also end by yourself feeling its real effect on the inner life.

Besides, analogous cases as to which the long and old experience of the race allows of no doubt, might have led you beforehand to understand rightly what I have now told you. The noble knights of the Middle Ages so well harmonised their private and public life that the beloved image often came to ennoble and animate their warlike deeds, so as to allow the most tender emotions to arise in the midst of rapine or terror. You know that history is still more decisive on this point even than poetry. If, then, the tender emotions have been able to combine so closely with works of destruction, why should not an analogous union be the result of occupations directed towards the happiness of Humanity, and free from all painful conflict with anyone?

Such harmony is only rare and difficult to-day on account of our deep-rooted anarchy, which usually prevents private as well as public life from acquiring the well-marked, steady character alone capable of being thus harmonised. Having at last freed myself from this state of discord, why should not a happy personal reaction result as a natural and direct reward for the service that I thus render to the public in lifting it out of the revolutionary quagmire? This first act, or rather this overture, which will give the tone to the whole of my immense opera, has specially consisted in systematically representing the life of affection as the necessary centre of all human existence, taking its place between the life of action and that of speculation, so as at last to proclaim the entire social supremacy of universal love, not only over force, but also over mind. Do not then be surprised that the course of such public work naturally associates itself with the spring of the most tender private feeling.

Perhaps I am insisting too much on this point. But consider, Clotilde, that gratitude is still more sweet to feel than to receive, and that, to my eyes, this outpouring of my heart is really my main reward. Moreover, I have the joyful thought that, during the composition of the four other acts of this volume, I shall never

leave the house but to meet you. From you alone then do I expect both stimulus and diversion ; and, in the certainty of this sweet order of my daily life, the work so closely bound up with my attachment becomes still dearer to me.

Farewell, then, my adored Clotilde, and thank you a thousand times : I look forward to this evening.

A^{te}. COMTE

Letter 37. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday, 1 September, 1845

My dearest philosopher, we are going to spend the day at Garges. Perhaps we shall not be back by seven o'clock, so do not run the risk of making a useless journey this evening.

I wish I had as free a heart as yours to bring to the sentiments in which we are associated ; be assured, however, that I feel your kindness very keenly, and that I give you every credit for it. I should like to have a little conversation with you : but I wish at any rate to tell you one thing essential for us both. It is that my family resents any very marked demonstration of attentions paid to me. Every feeling has its selfish side, even the purest feelings are not exempt ; we must humour them, and take human nature as it is. Do not try to modify this tendency in my folk ; do not make any overtures or insinuations on the subject, and leave me alone to guide you : this is necessary for my peace. We shall meet on Wednesday, and afterwards I will either see you or write to you, so do not let this disturb you. They have neither reproached me or remonstrated with me, but I know the weakness, and I take it into consideration, more on other people's account than on my own.

Farewell, my excellent friend ; you may rely upon me, and do not be grieved or troubled on my account. You may believe in my sincerity : that at least is a great support in life.

I hold you out my hand with tenderness.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 38. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 2 September, 1845 (7 o'clock).

You saw yesterday evening, my dear friend, that, notwithstanding your special advice, I considered that I ought to make

my accustomed visit, though I only expected to see your sister-in-law. Besides having so acted before under similar circumstances, I thought that I should the better comply with the purport of your letter, in showing that I do not come solely for you.

I should, therefore, have come over even at the risk of finding no one at home. If, as I presume, they knew that I was informed of the projected excursion, they might have given me due credit for the attention implied. I fear, though, that the reception was particularly reserved or indeed rather cold ; and your letter has not prevented me from being a little surprised at this, though I did not, I hope, seem to notice anything. Notwithstanding my natural impatience when my feelings are in any way hurt, I would for your dear sake bear peaceably with more serious annoyances than this, especially from your family.

I await, with a certain amount of anxiety, the explanation, written, or still better, oral, which you promise me, the nature of which your letter of yesterday morning does not sufficiently indicate. They certainly cannot think that the expressions of my friendship compromise you in any way : besides, in regard to whom ? It remains then to be seen if it is on my account or yours that they resent my preference for you ; do they wish to be the only ones to love you, or that I should love all the family in the same degree ? How in your forlorn state, could a consoling preference for you now appear strange ? According to your mysterious letter, the more generous hypothesis seems also to me, fortunately, the more probable one.

Still, in thinking of these rising annoyances, I do not attribute them to all your relatives, but principally to your young sister-in-law, for her childishly passionate nature impairs her excellent qualities. Your worthy mother seems to me much above such jealousy, which I do not even impute to your brother, not withstanding the spirit of contradiction which sometimes a little tarnishes his noble character.

But whatever be the nature and the source of these annoyances, I should like to preserve you from them, even at some sacrifice. If, as I am led to think from recent appearances, my weekly visits now seem too frequent, I will reduce them by half, trusting to your friendship for compensation. In general, my Clotilde, henceforth counting on your sincere affection, I have decided to let myself be guided by you submissively in matters which you alone are able to manage efficiently. However you

may thus deal with me, you will never be able to find in me anything but a man now inalterably determined always to adore, in one way or another, his noble spiritual spouse.

Farewell, dear friend, hoping to meet you to-morrow.

A^{te} COMTE

P.S.—In case you should prefer, as I hope you may, a verbal explanation, you will never run any risk of interruption at my house. To be prepared against any false construction I from the first told my servant that you come to consult me about your work, for which we have to be alone. I have therefore given her general orders, whenever you come, not to admit anyone, except the members of your family.

In sending you by a messenger this hurried scrawl, I hope that you have not already gone to the country: if you have, he has orders to bring me back the letter, which I will forward to you by post.

Letter 39. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday morning, 2 September, 1845

You are quite right in trusting to me. I ought to have told you long ago in true friendship how things stand, though there is nothing in the least serious. I do not trouble myself at all about my sister-in-law's foolishness. I am only concerned for my mother, and am anxious to spare her maternal susceptibilities. My mother has concentrated her tenderness and devotion so much upon us that she cannot help fearing lest we might in some way break away from her. The circumstances of my life have only helped to increase this tendency in her; and though she has often made me unhappy, I honour her because of her motives.

So do not blame yourself for anything: only use what I say to guide your own conduct, my dearest philosopher, and do not imagine that you are less liked here. Come on Friday, if that day suits you, or on another if more convenient. I will arrange the rest when I come to see you.

I have only time to scribble this note in haste. Please find in it the expression of my friendship and goodwill. I shall always find great difficulty in struggling to avoid sacrifices being made on my account.

Yours affectionately

DE VAUX

Letter 40. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 2 September, 1845 (4 o'clock)

Your letter of this morning now explains to me, dearest friend, the fatal conflict of affection, of which I must, without being to blame, bear the principal burden. I had thought, until now, that your family, and especially your mother, saw our holy friendship with perfect satisfaction : this assurance was very sweet to me, to say nothing of the facilities thus procured for our regular meetings. The sort of maternal jealousy of which you speak astonishes me greatly on the part of so remarkable a mother, but still it is necessary to understand things as they are, and recognise, as you do, this jealous concentration of tenderness. Your sex, and above all, your misfortunes, have specially rendered you the natural object of such tenderness. Since your brothers have, of course, outgrown parental control, it is natural that she should be more anxious to maintain her affectionate authority over you, and consequently that she should dislike anything that might tend to weaken it. This logic of affection is only too easy to understand, but I had thought that your excellent mother was above such susceptibilities ; still she cannot but share, to some extent, the weakness of poor human nature. The consequence of all this, unfortunately, appears to me more serious than it does to you. I already fear that it will cause the restriction, not of our inalterable friendship, but of our customary intercourse, just at the moment I hoped it was about to be consolidated by a sort of domestic consecration, as unanimous as touching. Following your friendly advice, I will resign myself, as I proposed this morning, to coming only on Fridays, which means that only once a week will my soul enjoy full life. I do not in the least doubt your good intentions with reference to the very sweet compensation you promise me, but its habitual realisation will be very difficult to you. At your own rooms, the regularity of our meetings would be more certain, because they would chiefly depend on me, and I have the greater freedom ; but this arrangement would offer such difficulties with regard to your own position, as would hardly permit of its being often carried out. You would certainly prefer coming here, but a thousand obstacles will prevent you from coming with sufficient regularity to compensate for the fact that my beloved visits paid during the week will henceforth become less frequent, though certainly none of them could be half so precious as a direct private interview. From the 20th of July,

you intended to come to see me once a week, and yet you have only granted me *two* real visits (on the 12th and 21st* of August). I am far from wishing to reproach you in the least, my dearest Clotilde, for I well know that you could not help it. But I cannot help seeing in this an unhappy omen for the progress of a friendship which is henceforth to be conducted on such lines. Still, it may be that a more pressing necessity now obliges you to make certain regular arrangements, and to these you may always rely upon my conforming. This hope alone can console me for the reduced frequency, henceforth, of these beloved interviews of ours, already become so necessary to my heart; and for these our precious letters can only be a feeble equivalent.

Farewell, my adorable friend, let us make your domestic peace our first object, and believe that I shall always be ready to submit to your natural authority in whatever form our intercourse may take. Above all, whatever may happen, rely upon the eternal devotion with which I am happy to feel myself inspired.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 41. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 5 *September*, 1845 (7 o'clock)

According to my second letter of Tuesday, that you must either have found on your return from Garges or have received the next morning, it will naturally be this evening that I shall make known, at your parents' house, the resolution, of which you have already approved, of calling there in future only on Fridays. But I will not take this step without first having your opinion as to the manner in which I should proceed. I could very well give as a reason the necessity of going to bed earlier as often as possible, either on account of my work or to make up for my approaching regular evenings at the Opera. Still, besides disliking this sort of insincerity, I doubt if it is right here to attribute to my own arrangements a step in taking which I sacrifice myself to the susceptibilities of others, the source of which though entitled to respect, is none the less unjust. I think I should let it be seen, in some way, that I am making a concession, as when I gave up the Wednesdays.

* This should probably be the 20th of *August*, constituting the Image of that date.—*Ed.*

Besides, is it not better to leave an opening for resuming the dropped visit, as they would scarcely venture to ask me to resume it, if they thought this would interfere with my arrangements? I know that the usual protestations towards those outside the family as a rule degenerate into simple phrases. None the less, artificial ties have been known to acquire as much intensity and persistence as if they had been natural. Your family seems to me capable of offering a fresh example of such a happy exception, which, besides, I think I fairly deserve. It seems to me therefore that whilst reducing the number of my visits, I should show myself always ready to increase their frequency again, as soon as I am seriously invited to do so.

However, I do not wish to do anything in this matter without your special advice. My readiness to be guided by you in all that concerns our intimate friendship is certainly generally due to the sincere affection upon which you have permitted me to rely. Besides, in this case, it is important that the step I am about to take should not appear to be the result of your suggestions, and to manage this well it should be under your guidance. Your letter of Monday suggested the hope of a happy visit, when we should naturally have had the opportunity of talking the matter over. Not having seen you, I will say nothing this evening to your relations, but if we come to this agreement, I shall on Sunday write to your brother giving up the usual Monday visit. If you wish more time for reflection, I can just miss next Monday under one pretext or another, so as to leave us a week longer for the decision. But in any case it is indispensable, from the nature and the source of the present difficulty, that we have a complete explanation, which can only result from a free conversation, and without this I ought not to take any decisive step.

Whatever it be, my dearest directress, I shall anxiously wait until you have organised afresh our diverse friendly meetings: my repose and my health depend upon this to some extent. Since this unpleasant incident, the convulsive agitation which was beginning to yield to sedative treatment, has again increased. This trouble, connected doubtless with the lower part of the spinal cord, is complicated by weakness and oppression, and even by a return of directly cerebral symptoms, which had disappeared—especially by sleeplessness, and sometimes by a profound melancholy, as in my nervous crisis of May, though so far to a much slighter extent, and this although I

have suspended my work since Tuesday. The happy evening of the day before yesterday* has left me a constant sensation of vague anxiety like that of expecting a great misfortune : it seems to me that they would wish to prevent my seeing you, and in that case I wonder what would become of me ! My inevitable sensitiveness in regard to all that concerns the most precious tie of my moral existence may, it is true, be increased just now by the fresh excitement resulting from my work. I think, however, that this morbid susceptibility is principally owing to such a shock coming so unexpectedly, at the very moment when I had reason to believe myself more closely united to your family. Alas, my Clotilde, the holy kiss by which you wished that our happy spiritual marriage should be sealed, in the presence of your parents, may perhaps have been the cause of the interior explosion of susceptibilities already awakened. This priceless token, the remembrance of which will always be with me, may have suggested a special desire to restrict our innocent relations. If your affectionate perception had not detected such a wish, you would not have recommended or encouraged the reduction of my weekly visits. You assure me, all the same, that, in reality, it is not a very serious matter, and since you are better informed on the subject than myself, I must believe you. But my security depends upon you alone : it can only result from the certainty I now have of your sincere attachment. Nevertheless, besides the pain I should feel, if I were involuntarily to cause any trouble between you and your family, or to expose you to any annoyance from them, the esteem and affection I feel for them would make me regret very much any coolness towards myself. To avoid this double disaster, it will be necessary that your friendly candour should explain all that your observations and your conjectures have shown you with regard to the actual dispositions of every one of them on the subject of our innocent intimacy. Farewell then, dear and worthy friend, we shall meet this evening. I hope you will excuse the somewhat excessive length of this letter, by thinking what a precious consolation this imperfect conversation procures me.

Always affectionately yours

A^{te} COMTE

* Image of 3 September, 1845.—Ed.

Letter 42. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 5 *September*, 1845

I should have been to see you yesterday if I had not been very unwell. During part of the day I thought I was poisoned. It was the effect of the champagne, and of a chill when coming back the other evening.

I do not wish you to be again ill or unhappy on my account. I will do as you wish. The tenderness you show me, and the high qualities that I know you possess, have sincerely attached me to you, and led me to reflect on our respective lots. I have tried to debate within myself the questions over which I have often made you draw a veil. I have asked myself how, in a position like mine, one could approach nearest to happiness, and I have come to the conclusion that it must be by trusting oneself to a firm attachment.

Since my misfortunes, my only dream has been motherhood : but I have always determined only to take as my partner a superior man and one capable of understanding the part he takes. If you think you can accept all the responsibilities belonging to family life, let me know, and I will decide my fate.

I think a great deal of my family, and I shall always try to remain attached to it, even if this should require some sacrifice on my part. All of us are equally free from crude or unjust prejudices, but they have been accustomed to have me in their midst, and the moment of separation will, at any time, produce a crisis of some sort. There are certain proprieties that I wish to observe ; but before enlarging further on these matters I must have your opinion on the principal point. Write to me, and with all the judgment and calm that such a subject demands. I will in reply tell you exactly what I feel. Do not come to me. Control your feelings at rue Pavée if you come there this evening. If you do not come, send word to that effect in a natural manner by your Sophie. I understand that discretion and cautiousness are not easy, but there are legitimate susceptibilities for which we must have due deference.

Farewell, take care of yourself, and let us avoid all strong emotions. I confide to you the rest of my life.

CLOTILDE

Letter 43. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday morning, 6 September, 1845 (10 o'clock)

I was obliged, my Clotilde, to exercise a great effort over myself yesterday, not to answer your divine letter immediately after having read it a second time on my knees before your altar, but I soon felt, following your wise recommendation, that any hasty impulse ought to be scrupulously avoided when considering the most important act of all my life. So I have restrained myself from writing until this morning, never having ceased one moment from meditating, with deep solicitude, on every aspect of such a resolve.

My reply is already practically determined by the sincere and spontaneous declaration in my letter of the 3rd July, a declaration which I have every day openly ratified in my morning *prayer*, of which this has ever since constituted the principal foundation. I have only, in fact, to apply to-day, with still deeper and more sacred energy to an immediate and certain future, what I then applied to one distant and uncertain. In a word, I consider you, from yesterday, as my only true wife, not only future, but present and eternal.

Your generous confidence in me will doubtless permit that this union shall receive, if necessary, its most perfect guarantee, by the ineffable seal which renders the mutual engagement of honourable hearts complete and irrevocable. In expressing, at your feet, the gratitude that such a concession inspires, I promise you that its realisation shall always be respectfully left to you. After having, like yourself, and for a much longer time, wished for and vainly hoped to feel the sublime emotions of a parent, how sweet it would be to me at last to owe them to my Clotilde!

At the stormy beginning of our intimacy, I expressed to you in my letter of the 17th of May, with reference to the exceptional rights morally belonging to our exceptional situation, a very decided opinion, which the maturest reflection enables me fully to confirm. For all those who feel, with mind and heart, the true character of the holy social laws, always general but never absolute, our complete union, far from separating us from the normal state, brings us, on the contrary, back to it, as far as the fatality of our respective positions will allow. As soon as it may become possible I shall be happy to solemnise my engagements before the temporal magistrate and the spiritual functionary—in short by every possible means that Humanity has been able

to institute for the public consecration of private bonds. But until that wished-for day, and even if alas ! it should never come, I shall never cease to consider myself, henceforward, as indissolubly bound as if our vows had received all the social guarantees which, although deeply useful to all, are not really indispensable except to commonplace hearts and minds. For a long time I have secretly thought of you under this aspect, so I have been able duly to appreciate the full extent of all the different duties which would thus devolve upon me. So you may already believe, how fully mature are the reflections that I have, since yesterday, never ceased to make on the sacred engagement which I now contract joyfully, but deliberately, whereby I *accept*, according to your characteristic expressions, *all responsibilities whatever which are inherent to family life*.

There is only one serious difficulty that our position will require us to face ; it is the question of how far our happiness should be allowed to be known. It could only, if ever, be revealed to a very few persons sufficiently high-minded to understand it and respect it. I agree beforehand to every precautionary measure which your loving prudence may consider proper in regard to your own position, or even to mine. It is most satisfactory to find that your views confirm the hopes I had already entertained as to the wise and high ideas and nobly independent views of your worthy family in regard to such a union. Still, I feel sure that, even towards them, you will always maintain a due consideration ; and I shall have no difficulty in seconding your respect for the feelings of an honourable family, which will soon be virtually my own. Far from any childish jealousy ever prompting me to make you neglect your duties towards them, you may be sure, adorable wife, that my respectful love will always be strengthened by witnessing your sincere filial affection.

To you, to whom I already owe the purest and most sublime emotions of my life, to you then I shall also owe the unhopèd-for happiness which is to distinguish the second half of a career that until now I had thought destined to an awful loneliness ! I await your explanations and your final resolution impatiently but respectfully, being already quite sure that, notwithstanding your confession of last June, the heart that your noble loyalty freely promises me is now free from the conflict caused by your former attachment. Accepting with confidence the precious life

that you confide to me, I offer you from this moment all the unchangeable affection of

Your devoted husband

A^{te} COMTE

In order to avoid the delay of the post, I am sending this sacred letter by our good Sophie. She will also, for the sake of appearances, bring you the interesting *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, and for the same reason, you could give her any of the books that you may wish to send back to me. Above all, she will bring me the latest news of your precious health. As for myself, although, as you may imagine, I have hardly been able to sleep, I feel, on the whole, much better. Notwithstanding my muscular weakness, my cerebral energy is already almost restored by the happy issue of this crisis, which, I feel, will soon become as favourable to my health as to my happiness. Let us hope that it will be the same with you.

I have given your brother to understand that on account of my health it will be better not to count upon my visit next Monday, so, without having to explain myself at all, this leaves, if you like, until Friday next, to come to an understanding ; thus we need not meet before your relations until we have planned all our essential arrangements.

In my first letter of Tuesday, I mentioned my general instructions with regard to your dear visits, not forgetting the only exception that I allow. Perhaps it may be well now not to make any exception. Unless you recommend me to maintain it I will put an end even to this one.



Letter 44. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday, 6 September, 1845

You will understand, my dear friend, that I found nothing to reply to you by means of your Sophie. I felt the need of reading your communication by myself : and your affectionate letter brings me the hope that we shall sympathise as well in the important actions of our lives as in the most ordinary ones. Let me then once more assure you how tenderly I esteem you, and how my happiness will ever result from contributing to yours.

You know my material situation. I possess nothing now. And, although I can, in case of need, rely on the love of my mother,

yet on leaving home I must renounce the resources which were there assured to me. I do not regard you as an ordinary man, and, in placing myself under your protection, I feel that my self-respect will never have to suffer. I accept all the advantages that my association with you may be able to bring me, I intend to devote myself to study and to the cultivation of whatever talent I may find I possess. This is my plan of life : affection and thought. The rest is secondary, but yet it is important so far as it is affected by consideration of propriety. I will come to talk this over with you to-morrow about one o'clock.* In the meanwhile, on your side, think it over. I shall always be happy to be guided by you, and to have the help of your experience.

You are right not to come on Monday ; I shall not speak to my mother until the last moment. Though we have very often talked together on such a subject, I have felt that there would always be a conflict between her impulse and reflection if she had to face it herself.

Rely in all respects upon my loyalty : it is a family virtue with us.

Farewell, my tender father, I embrace you.

CLOTILDE

Letter 45. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday morning, 8 September, 1845 (3 o'clock)

In the name of the sincere affection you have for me, I entreat you, my Clotilde, to appoint, as soon as possible, a time when we may talk together as freely as we did yesterday. Until then I shall not be able to think seriously of anything else. Besides, without such an interview, I feel myself incapable even of making my usual Friday's visit at your relative's house.

The powerful effort that I nobly exercised over myself yesterday must have proved to you that the purity of my devotion is equal to its strength. But it has led me to feel, as I had not hitherto clearly felt, that to the life of which I accepted at your feet every material and moral responsibility, being now ready to undertake all this, there is yet one necessary condition. Your confidence in me should freely grant me, through deliberate affection, that which I do not regret not having obtained yesterday by entreaty or by seduction. So long as the final natural seal is wanting to our union I feel it will continue to offer me only a

* Image of 7 September, 1845.—Ed.

precarious stability, which I shall always fear to see give way at the least obstacle. In short, without this pledge of our alliance I could not consider you as being engaged to me as irrevocably as I acknowledge I am to you.

I highly approve of the few months' delay that, in your affectionate prudence you will employ in smoothing the legitimate susceptibilities of your family, so as little by little to lead them, if it is possible, to reconcile our definitive union with that affection which they bear towards you, and is so valuable to both of us. Fully appreciating the value of your happy family ties, I am ready to assist in every possible way during this indispensable period of transition, by so modifying my manner towards you that my presence in the house of your relatives will no longer give them any grounds for their affectionate jealousy. But the perfect sincerity, which is the best part of my character, would not, I feel, allow me habitually to dissemble in this way, if I had not first obtained from you the irrevocable token which, on my knees, I beg of you. When the basis of my life shall thus have acquired full security, you will see that it will become easy for me to modify my conduct so as to satisfy the different proprieties that I must respect. I shall even do it quite spontaneously, yielding with joy to the satisfaction of giving to the dear companion of my whole life an additional proof of my respectful affection. But, on the other hand, without this one certain guarantee of the indissolubility of our union, my heart tells me that I should be placed with your relatives in a false position, which would very soon become incompatible with the irresistible tendencies of my nature. I pray you, then, to remove the only obstacle which might check my natural impulse to cherish all that is dear to you.

Therefore, my Clotilde, weigh carefully these various observations on the cardinal point of our exceptional situation, and believe that our whole future depends on your decision. Far from dreading the serious consequences which the concession that I solicit may naturally bring, you have loyally acknowledged that maternity was always your cherished dream, and you judge me worthy to be your partner in it. Your refusal now could thus only be due to want of trust in my constancy. I await, my beloved, with feverish anxiety, the favourable reply you owe to him who already regards himself irrevocably as

Your devoted husband

A^{te} COMTE

Notwithstanding my extreme agitation, I made an effort yesterday not to miss the monthly dinner at Monsieur de Blainville's. After having painfully awaited the end of a meal in which I had scarcely taken part, I was obliged to go home immediately.

An almost sleepless night obliges me, from prudence, to remain in bed to-day until dinner-time. In order not to neglect any of the palliatives which are at my disposal, I shall only take my bath at four o'clock. But I feel only too surely that you alone can really make me calm.

Letter 46. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday morning, 8 September, 1845

I must write to you immediately : pardon my imprudence. Alas ! I feel myself as yet unable to pass the bounds of friendly affection. No one can appreciate you more than I do, and the feeling which I have not for you I have for no other man, but the past still makes me suffer, and I was wrong to wish to make nought of it. Be generous in every way, as in some ways you are. Let me have time and work ; at present we should only expose ourselves to cruel regrets.

I rely very much on your impartial judgment. For my part, I have tried my strength ; forgive me, in favour of my good intentions. I am filled with gratitude for your generous views, and for all the kindness I have received from you : but do not let us ever speak of money ; that is too painful.

Farewell, if you really know me you will not be angry with me. If you do not, I have no hope of making myself understood.

Farewell, my most worthy friend. My relatives are more sensible of your worth than you think. If my father does not come this evening, they propose to pay you a visit *en famille*.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE

Letter 47. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday evening, 8 September, 1845

I have just received your letter, and, although the one that I have just posted to you should suffice as a reply, I should like to write to you more fully on the subject.

I am incapable of giving myself without love. I felt that yesterday. I should look with horror upon any attempt to bargain about myself. I must then wait, as I originally proposed, until my heart is properly free and at rest. Until then, I offer you the affection which seemed to make you happy before my imprudent step. I shall see you at my parents' house, if you will and can continue to come there. Otherwise I shall return to my solitude.

I also am ill. Do not therefore misuse the power that I expected voluntarily to give you. If your behaviour had been other than it was, I should perhaps have felt contempt for you : instead, I feel esteem and affection for you. You have only been wrong in urging me to the act that I have just committed. Let us once more be free. In six months' time I will again put the question to myself, and if we are agreed, it will be time enough then to engage ourselves. Until then, I want to work. As I have told you, I have with difficulty recovered my health : it is time that I began to utilise it ; my life's future depends upon this.

I am more upset than you by this affair, so please do not be angry with me. Bring your noble intelligence to bear in controlling yourself, and do not try to lead me again to any act we should regret.

I am most gratefully and affectionately yours

CLOTILDE

Letter 48 From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 9 *September*, 1845 (4 o'clock)

I have with the utmost difficulty forced myself, my Clotilde, to let the night pass before replying to your two last letters. Although very much touched by your affectionate earnestness I cannot help thinking it would have been better if you had imposed upon yourself a similar restraint. You would then have perceived the evident inconsequence of such a reply. What ! you spontaneously and unexpectedly made me a promise of approaching happiness on Friday, which you confirm on Saturday ; on Sunday you elude it, and withdraw it on Monday ! Is not this carrying a woman's privilege rather too far ?

The meaning of your two last letters is only too clear ; but, much as I am grieved, I am not angry with you. Besides the evidence they afford of the continuance of your precious affection,

I find in them new reasons for admiring, even at my own expense, that perfect sincerity and purity which have contributed so much to my resolve to make you the object of my adoration. Therefore be quite at ease as to the general effect upon me of what you say. But do not imagine on that account that I altogether give up the demand that I made to you yesterday, the two chief reasons for which, I fear, in the hurry of reply, you have not fully understood. Your second letter I must especially consider as having been written without due reflection, for in it, by retreating to a position much beyond that occasioned by the actual crisis, far from becoming my true spouse, you would really cease to be even a friend, if I fully accepted some cold expressions which cannot convey your true feelings.

It is not at all for my personal gratification that I ask for this sacred pledge: it is really with a double purpose—first, as a guarantee, and secondly as a means to an end.

From the first point of view, in postponing it for the present, you only strengthen me in my claims by making me see the need of an irrevocable act to put an end to your fatal hesitations. The impossibility of your seriously engaging yourself to me without this indispensable concession confirms me in my well-grounded fears of yesterday. Declarations like those made in your divine letter of Friday are not to be revoked at will. But the very attempt to withdraw them proved the need of an irrevocable guarantee such as more or less characterises all human relations. Moreover, your two letters of yesterday confirm, by the present state of your heart, that of which your well-trying sincerity had already made me certain. Your heart is now free: but I only exist in it as a friend, though without any actual rival; for a relic of the past is all that stands in my way. Contenting myself as I do with this modest place in it, I cannot see how this should make you refuse, or even definitely adjourn, a concession which I ask for not because of its own sweetness (provided it be not repugnant to you), but on grounds of the deepest importance to both of us. Be assured that it will complete the giving of rest to your heart, and perhaps also (permit me this scientific suggestion), of health to your body.

As the means of recognition, either you have not sufficiently felt, or I have not adequately explained, how important this concession is to enable me to behave to your relations in a manner which, without encroaching on sincerity, will conform fully to the proprieties which I desire to respect as much as you

do. You do not know how much the habitual feeling of inward satisfaction can add fresh vigour to my mind, and also scope to my character, which has hitherto at present been too much restrained towards your family by my exclusive preoccupation with your adorable nature. In the presence of those for whom I feel esteem and confidence in such high degree as to constitute complete and unrestrained relations, I might almost become what is called 'pleasant company,' by giving, without any assumption of superiority, free scope to the various inspirations of my mind. But I cannot possibly feel free unless my inward happiness is permanently secured. It is especially in this way that the sweet concession I persist in claiming will so effectively bring about the change you have rightly wished in my usual behaviour to your relatives, that it will soon be the opposite of that which you know to be natural to my turn of mind.

Be it as pledge, or as means, this concession then becomes necessary. Yet the sincerity of my intentions is such that, notwithstanding the value I attach to this unspeakable personal satisfaction, I am quite ready, from delicacy towards you, at once to withdraw this legitimate request if you can fulfil this double purpose effectively in any other way.

I feel very strongly the allusion you made, last Sunday, to the heroic conduct which befits superior beings. I never pretend, either in my writings or in my words, to soar above the general feelings and natural impulses of human nature. Let us leave these mystical pretentions to theology and metaphysics. As the founder of systematic Positivism, I shall always honour myself in thinking, as the delightful Terence pointed out, in that admirable verse (the most marvellous perhaps that has been left to us by antiquity, as being the most contrary to its fierce genius), 'I am a man, and nothing human seems foreign to me.*' Do not then talk to me any more of sacrificing my happiness to my glory; this I am accustomed to rest on higher considerations. Superior natures should differ from the vulgar, not in their natural wants, but only in the manner of satisfying them. By your inopportune appeal to my generosity, do you want to make me regret having been too generous the day before yesterday; for your sincerity inclines you to admit that, if I had then persisted, you would have yielded without repugnance? But, whatever happens, I shall never regret having waited for a time for free affection to

* Terence. *The Self-Tormentor*.—Ed.

grant that which I might prematurely have snatched by a gentle insistence.

I think, my Clotilde, that I have sufficiently examined all the obstacles raised by your inconsiderate anxiety in opposition to the promise you spontaneously made. This priceless concession would, in my eyes, be insufficient, if it were not offered entirely of your own free will: this is why I have so strongly urged upon you these serious considerations which your ill-founded scruples prevent you from now appreciating, although previously you had better perceived their intrinsic importance.

If you still continue so cruelly to oppose my wishes, you will make me fear, as I said yesterday, that your refusal is principally caused by want of confidence in me. For in this case I could only really attribute it to your thinking, dishonourably for me, of the common tendency of this sacred concession to diminish the strength of attachment. I cannot however help thinking that you know me well enough to spare me from such a suspicion. Nothing, on the contrary, has so much power over me as confidence. This I have never been able to resist: the only great fault of my private life was specially caused by the need of rewarding at any price, a confidence which turned out in fact to be delusive.

For these different reasons, I must still count on the careful revision to which I propose you should submit your too hasty withdrawal. I have so much confidence in your sincere affection, that I leave entirely to you the final decision, provided you give it serious consideration. Should you, after this, no longer be willing really to become my wife, I feel that I can never lose the affectionate regard I entertain for you even under its first unalterable form of simple friendship. Give me, then, such a place in your heart as shall be found truly compatible with the general tendency of your present feelings: however small that place may be, I value you too much not to accept it with gratitude, seeing that you no longer forbid hope. Far from hindering the normal development of your noble intellectual and moral nature, the degree of intimacy that I still persist in respectfully soliciting, would be in itself very helpful in facilitating this end, either by better directing my spontaneous influence, or more especially by giving to your existence a clearer object and a firmer character. But, however powerful these new motives may be, they have, like the others, only real weight as far as your actual decision remains entirely voluntary.

All this long letter is, then, only destined the better to guard you against precipitation, which might here become still more harmful in refusal than in acquiescence.

The title that, at first, you freely gave me leave to take does not permit of such a brusque revocation. I do not think, then, notwithstanding these first fluctuations, that I need yet cease to consider myself already, until your final free decision, as

Your affectionate husband

A^{te}. COMTE

P.S.—I shall not speak much of the evident injustice of your inexplicable unwillingness to continue our free personal interviews, quite unconnected with the present crisis, since it was two months ago that you spontaneously allowed them to me as appropriate both in principle and practice, provided we met at my house, and not at yours, the propriety of which arrangement I at once acknowledged.

I must say, it would be a poor recompense for my unselfish conduct of the day before yesterday, if you deserted the room where this interview took place and where, from henceforth, whether you will or not, your image is everywhere deeply imprinted.

I will not, however, indulge in vain recriminations on the wrong you have done me by this withdrawal : you have perhaps already confessed it to yourself as due to the haste in which your second letter was written : I wish rather to point out to you a project that I have formed with reference to our meetings, and which is consistent with the decision at which you have now arrived.

You have expressed to me a serious desire to study history, the importance of which will become more and more evident as you advance in your promising literary career. Now, I can certainly help you very much, both in directing your reading, and by intelligently representing the whole of the past. I may say that I am the only man in the world at present who could give you this valuable guidance, as your brother knows. In addition to the natural talks on your own works, your periodical visits would henceforward have a precise object and a regular character, and no one could venture to object that they were only a pretext for meetings of affection. For more than fifteen years I have been asked to give, even to ladies, this new form of historical teaching, though the project has never

been carried out, principally on account of the want of perseverance on the part of the pupils. It would be sweet to me that it should be first realised with you. By this means you would begin to feel, as I do, a happy concord between private and public life, of which the interior conflict, up to the present time, troubles your noble existence. You see, my dear Clotilde, that I conclude with sincere thoughts of reconciliation a necessary explanation with which my best affections are deeply concerned. Is not this returning good for evil, as is natural to me ?

Letter 49. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday, 9 September, 1845

You are wrong in saying that you return me good for evil : any I have done you arose from a generous motive ; I do not deplore it the less on that account. But notwithstanding my mistake, and the excellence of your heart and conduct, I must make my actual feelings plain to you. If you were to constrain me, by any means whatever, to yield to you on the point in question, I would never see you again all my life. You do not know to what degree any violence of this kind would exasperate me : a woman who has lived in chastity for a long time can only give herself with enthusiasm, or with the purpose of becoming a mother. I know what marriage is, and I know myself better than the most learned man in the world can know me. Do not, then, make the slightest remonstrance with my feelings : it would not change them, and it would only make me very unhappy.

I beg you not to speak of your rights and of the sacrifices made me on Sunday : both are illusions. A woman of thirty is not to be treated as if she were a little girl. I own I have been wrong, and I regret it, but I feel it too much for you to remind me of it. Control yourself, use your faculties as a man, and do not impose upon yourself a continence that you consider harmful. And let me hope that not another word on this subject may be uttered between us for a long while.

Not being led by passion, I can at least use my reason : and so what I say now is said after due reflection. I need not remind you that I saw in you only the father of a child, and not a lover. Our conversation of Sunday has changed the views I had on this

subject, and nothing will make me go back from my new plan of life. I ask you again then, strongly but affectionately—not another word.

Take care of yourself, and use the best means of preserving your health. Who asks you to edify human nature into seraphic nature? Have I ever fallen into the absurdities of the Spiritualists? More than any one I believe in human nature, for no one is so much under its influence as myself: indeed, I honour it, and do it honour in my whole conduct, unobtrusively.

Come, dear friend, pull yourself together, and use your share of common sense. I, a woman, want all mine.

This being an answer, it requires none from you. I wish you good health from the bottom of my heart. For the present I cannot accept your advice and your lessons, for by complicating my occupations I should either do myself harm or I should not succeed in anything.

Come to our house on Mondays and Fridays. It will be my business to receive you kindly there.

Farewell, dearest friend, if you have any affection for me you will behave as I wish.

CLOTILDE

Letter 50. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday morning, 10 September, 1845 (9 o'clock)

In accordance with your final decision, a decision which I had yesterday anticipated and accepted, let us strive to forget, my dear friend, as a troubled dream, the abortive crisis through which we have just passed, and again take up the happy course of our cordial relations. When you have better understood the long letter to which you have, I think, replied somewhat prematurely, you will recognise that, far from yielding to impassioned impulse, I was showing, by indisputable reasons suited to our situation, that your unexpected proposal was a wise inspiration, though I had never suggested it, directly or indirectly, as all my former letters will prove. You have, it is true, inspired me with the only deep passion that I have ever felt, and I feel but too well that it will only cease with my life: but it is, I can truly say, as pure as it is strong. Since the Saint-Clotilde, when our continuous friendship really began, no sensual thought had, until this crisis, ever disturbed my private adoration, whether in your presence or even in

your absence. My private correspondence and my conduct savour certainly much more of Don Quixote than of Don Juan. In spite of this shock, in no way due to my own action, I return then without any effort, to my dear habit of noble and chivalrous tenderness, always leaving to your affectionate wisdom the general control of all our relations. I hope this last storm will leave behind it no other permanent trace than that of a memorable and mutual confirmation of the sincerity of your affection, and of the fulness of my devotion.

In the midst of these sweet impressions, it is very painful to me, Clotilde, to have to express, although I cannot pass it over in silence, how much I have felt the unjust suspicion with which you begin your letter. Of all odious actions, the most repugnant to my character in general is assuredly to force a woman, through fear or by fraud, to the satisfaction of a brutal desire. I am proud to be of the very small number of those men who, even in their greatest youthful ardour, have never merited, in any case, the least reproach of this kind. How could you then, for a single instant, believe me capable of so unworthily taking advantage of you in any circumstances whatever? Was it then, from my Clotilde that the only accusation of the kind that I have ever received was to come! But I presume that you had already spontaneously retracted it, heart and mind, immediately after having inconsiderately written it.

I wish very much to be able to take up again, the day after to-morrow, the precious custom of my double weekly visit to your worthy relatives' house. What you tell me of their very commonplace manner of regarding our relationship certainly a little diminishes my too favourable opinion of the elevation of their ideas and the generosity of their feelings, but this can only increase my gratitude for their general behaviour towards me, inasmuch as their invariable patience must proceed from a high appreciation of myself. Notwithstanding my habitual sincerity, I should already have very much modified my manner towards you before them, if you had informed me sooner that I was wrong in attributing to them dispositions of a more elevated turn, such as we should ourselves have felt under the same circumstances. I hope that you will see in future that, without any infringement of truthfulness, I can duly adapt myself to susceptibilities even when I do not approve of them, as long as they come from motives so worthy of respect. My 'Saint-Clotilde' should already have

proved to you that, when necessary, I can nobly repress any ill-timed manifestations of my dearest sentiments.

Having been for ten days absorbed by my private life, I will try to-morrow again to take up my public life: I already begin to feel, according to my happy custom, their fundamental agreement. This last crisis, which, when I least expected it, opened out an ultimate prospect of true domestic felicity, will urge me better to deserve the great results of our pure affection, and even better to bring them about, by developing more fully all the faculties likely to honour or assure a social position which will perhaps directly interest my Clotilde.

Farewell, dear and noble friend, I hope to see you on Friday.

For ever, yours lovingly

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 51. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday evening, 13 September, 1845

When I see you suffer, I feel how much my heart has of affection for you. So please do not be angry with me, my dear friend: I am giving you all the best that can be offered to a man—the rest is not at my disposal.

Take care of yourself in every way. Although life seems to me more fearful than beautiful, I for my part cling to it, and I try, as far as possible, to look on the bright side of it. When one has contracted the habit of making these efforts they may perhaps become necessary to us.

I have only time to send you this greeting.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE

Letter 52. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 14 September, 1845 (2 o'clock).

Your affectionate greeting came unexpectedly yesterday evening, to make up for a day of melancholy agitation and deep dejection, that I was obliged to spend in bed, except during the time for my bath and my meals. How much good a few words can do! Yesterday, I fancied myself almost abandoned to my solitude, not because of any estrangement, but on

account of unnecessary submission to a tyrannical jealousy. The continual surveillance with which we are to be henceforth surrounded made me fear that your mother's recent kindness towards me might be the result of a sort of bargain, in which in exchange for my being allowed to visit your family regularly you had tacitly given up writing to me and visiting me. Your dear letter reassures me as to the first sacrifice : may I also soon be reassured with regard to the second !

Could I be capable of ill-feeling, even towards you, you would have no need, my dear friend, at the present moment to ask for my forbearance. Alas ! my divine Clotilde, why should I be angry with you ? Would it be because you have tried to make me happy, or because you were not able to do so ? Looking back on this crisis, I find nothing in it to deplore but our fatal situation : the more I think of it the more deeply I am led to adore you. The similarity of our respective burdens will be now increased by the common misfortune we share. Far from complaining of you, I feel my confidence in your pure affection on the increase. If they had left us alone for a single instant the day before yesterday, I intended to have told you, with regard to this matter, that my last reflections have decided me now from conviction, as at first from deference, to follow your directions implicitly in everything concerning our relationship.

In one incident only of all those that have given me so much pain during this storm do I find a difficulty in using my fortunate power of forgetting : that is, when, on Tuesday, you supposed me for a single instant capable of brutal and treacherous conduct, without taking the least notice, in your letter of Wednesday, of my remonstrance, expressed, as it was, without bitterness. Though I endeavoured to excuse this injustice by considering the exasperation likely to be aroused by the situation, I am too sincere to let you believe that I have as yet succeeded.

Do not be anxious, my dear friend, with regard to my health, or, at any rate, to my own care for it. In a moment of alarm, I sent yesterday for my doctor, who was not at home ; but, two hours later, having considered the matter, I sent in time to cancel the former message, and I am glad I did so. I shall certainly take care not to neglect anything that is reasonable. Blainville, with whom I had a talk on Sunday about my condition, told me that I was doing everything that was really necessary. The sound

theory of living bodies has long since taught me the difficult and important art of knowing when to have recourse to medicine ; but I do not foolishly pride myself on this point, and shall always be willing to have recourse to my doctor when he can really be of use : that is to say, if fever supervenes, or if digestion goes wrong ; until then his attendance would do more harm than good, and he is too sensible not to be aware of the fact.

I am very glad, my dear friend, that you can really work steadily : it is, in our case, the best remedy, when one is able to apply it. My own condition does not as yet fully admit of it, whether because the disturbance is in my case deeper, or because my work is less favourable to it than yours. The premature effort of the day before yesterday undoubtedly contributed much to my prostration of yesterday. After the interesting 'overture' for which I thanked you on the 26th of August, I am now, for the remainder of this first volume, condemned to the driest part of my new work—the purely logical part, the only one where my affection cannot really aid my thought, according to my happy general theory, here subject, like all true theories, to an unfortunate exception. If I had to write my second volume the case would be very different, so much so that I have sometimes thought of beginning with this, and putting off the first volume. But although this work really allowed, as far as I am concerned, of such changes of arrangement in its working out, my confirmed habits of systematic regularity are too much opposed to it. So, in forcing myself to adopt the natural order, my composition suffers to-day from the state of my feelings, which can only here serve indirectly, either as a consequence of the general elasticity which is the result of happiness, or by setting a higher value on my success. I am going seriously to continue the effort for some days, but if my heart continues to hinder me, I can patiently await a better cerebral condition. Time will be lost, no doubt, and this is a serious disadvantage, but at all events it can be made up—whereas, if my health suffered, it would be a very different matter. So, to prevent any serious mischief, my principal effort must be directed to avoiding any simultaneous over-excitement of the front and back parts of the brain. Almost insensible to the reverses of fortune, and even to wounded self-love, I feel myself very weak against any troubles of the heart.

My greeting, dear friend, is as usual, longer than yours. It is not only that in general I require more expansion, but to-day I find

in it a means of utilising pleasantly some of my hours of sleeplessness. As long as you believe that in the sacred interests of your precious family ties you ought to suspend your dear visits, I beg of you to multiply as much as you can these tokens of your affectionate remembrance which, first in themselves, and then in the replies they require, give me much more relief than all the soothing draughts of orthodox nerve-treatment. Farewell then, and thank you, my Clotilde ; we shall meet to-morrow evening although we be under observation. Let us hope for a better future. Always rely on the entire devotedness of

Your tender friend

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 53. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, 14 September, 1845

Nothing will ever please me more than to give you pleasure, and to show you the attachment with which you have inspired me. Whatever my moral perturbations may be, I hope always to preserve the faculty of appreciating good in others : thus, I give you a large part of my heart.

I should regret, however, to have been wanting in justice and to have inspired you with any bitter feeling towards my people, by failing sufficiently to attribute my recent action to its real cause. If I felt that my present feeling towards you was love, it is probable that I should be able to make it consistent with my tenderness for my relations, or to bring them to a fuller liberality of feeling than they have yet shown. So do not accuse them any more. The source of the evil is within me. But it is there for my sorrow as well as for yours ; and I tell you this boldly, for the truth never wounds a noble heart. My misfortunes are no more commonplace than my nature, and it is really impossible to judge them without knowing them.

I loved with all my strength one of whom I was worthy, one who loved me equally. He was living alone, and seemed to have no other ties but those of his family. Circumstances brought us together, and we soon became equally necessary to each other. He seemed to take a tender interest in my welfare, and often advised me to engage myself in the way for which I seemed so well

fitted. He added that he would never cease to be my friend, and that I should always find him disposed to prove so. His deeds were in perfect harmony with his words, and I have never met a man of purer and nobler feelings. Still, I could not understand his conduct with regard to me ; and the day he explained it, I believed, several times, that I was going to die, such terrible anguish my sorrow caused me. He also had ties, and duties besides. We had been able to appreciate each other enough to understand the full extent of our misfortune. We tried to brave it out by loving each other ardently as friends. But this trial was too much for my strength, and it sank me into the state I was in all last year ; and I had to give up the greatest and purest happiness that I have experienced in my life.

I am now recovering from this state, and during this cruel period, desperate ideas of vice and crime have often presented themselves to my mind. MORE THAN OTHERS I HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE WEAKNESS OF OUR NATURE WHEN IT IS NOT DIRECTED TOWARDS A HIGH AIM, ONE INACCESSIBLE TO THE PASSIONS.* You will find this episode in my present work. it is a fearful instance of the evil resulting from the *disregard of social obligations, even when it is most excusable and even honourable in its cause.*

My strength has been worn out in barren agitation ; my devotion has been simply wasted ; and I am now utterly broken down without ever having truly lived.

Farewell, my dear friend, at least I have the means of teaching others : this is still a real interest in my life, and I wish to make the most of it.

Take care of yourself, and rely upon all that is kind and affectionate in my heart.

CLOTILDE

Letter 54. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 10 September, 1845 (10 o'clock)

Various incidents have prevented me from replying sooner to the touching letter that I received yesterday morning. While completing and making clear your painful confidences of June, it unfolds to me perfectly your admirable moral nature. So with

* The third of the Seven Maxims of Clotilde de Vaux.—*Ed.*

each new appreciation, I am always drawn, my Clotilde, to adore thee still more. By this means the sacred embellishment of misfortune becomes inseparable from your noble image, and better characterises the sum of my duties towards thee. These duties may in future be summed up in the sacred obligation of making you forget, if possible, this sad past. If I should ever succeed in this, it would give the deepest satisfaction to my inmost feelings. I know how difficult a task this must prove for me, but I could not propose a nobler aim to my private ambition. If I should never succeed in it, the mere attempt, consistently persisted in, will, I hope, serve to make both of us alike happier and better.

As far as I am concerned, I thank you for the lasting effect produced by this precious communication. Needing for a time a purifying influence after the shock of an event beyond my control, I may tell you that I had, first by my better feeling and then by the force of reason, spontaneously almost succeeded, when your salutary revelation resulted in bringing my efforts to a happy, and, above all, a permanent conclusion. I now feel how much your noble personal repugnance has been useful to both of us, in hindering us from succumbing to the last crisis, which, instead of tender remembrances of mutual esteem, would finally have left us, as you have rightly judged, long regrets. Though my sex cannot pretend to the exquisite delicacy of which yours is susceptible, I assure you, however, Clotilde, that if I had known in time what you told me yesterday, I should have spared you, last week, the indiscreet solicitations, of which you need not fear any return, even when we resume our intimate friendly interviews.

As long as the state of your heart forbids the most complete intimacy, of which it shall be for you alone to judge, even though I should suffer in silence, I would never importune you upon this subject. Though this final situation should always remain impossible, I still owe you an inestimable benefit for the noble friendship, which I now possess, and shall strive to merit more and more. Owing to you, I have unexpectedly gained a source of pure and lasting happiness, following upon the enjoyment for three years of the domestic quiet which I so urgently needed; and despite the constant tendency of our nature, I shall, I hope, always be able to restrain the desire which is so dear to me within the bounds that you impose. I should wish, my Clotilde, to ascribe to thee all my personal progress in virtue as well as in happiness.

With what noble resolution the whole of your misfortunes has finally inspired you ! Yes, my sacred friend, consecrate your public life to the dissemination of those important moral lessons you have learnt in your private life—that is an admirable idea. I am proud to be appreciated by one who in the midst of our profound moral anarchy has spontaneously given herself such a mission. Such an intimacy, far from ever injuring my own public character, can only, as I have from the first foreseen, tend to ennoble it still more. It is for me, Clotilde, to ask myself, trembling at the answer, if I shall always remain completely worthy of you. With regard to your great aim, I hope that, in accordance with your happy expression of Saturday, you are going to cling more and more closely to life. Permit me also to think that, with you the need of living will be intensified, if only accessorially, by the growing conviction that you have become, in whatever manner, really indispensable to him whose existence is not without a certain value for the constant service of the great human evolution.

In pursuing your noble project you will happily utilise the inherent advantages of your own work, which requires, in the highest degree, that you should make use in it, entirely and directly, of the results of your own painful experience. Both of us are in fact treating, though under very different points of view, the same subject—that is, Human Nature and Existence : but you confine yourself to private life, ever brought back to its moral centre, without concerning yourself with its speculative and active sides ; my office, on the contrary, enjoins me to omit no constituent of the collective life of Humanity. You can then content yourself with inward contemplation, and you have only, as you so well remark, to make a picture from the events of your own life. My main work, on the other hand, must consist in looking outside, into all times and places in succession, putting aside my personal impressions except in so far as they help me to see and feel. This is why, besides the fact that the last crisis must have shaken me more severely than you, the same situation which impels you specially to work, momentarily deters me from it.

Notwithstanding this natural diversity, my dearest friend. I hope that, avoiding any puerile or dangerous obstinacy, it will not be long before with restored health I again take up my labours, and this because, since the wholesome shock of yesterday, my moral existence tends fully to recover its happy equilibrium of last

month; nay, it is even lightened by a ray of hope for a future of which before I did not dare to dream. Good-bye, and thank you.

Ever yours with my whole heart,

A^{te} COMTE

I acknowledge that I was at first a little unjust towards your family, who are really worthy of you. Yesterday evening you must have seen that I did my best to make up for this temporary mistake, and you will feel it, I hope, more and more. In general, my Clotilde, may your sweet friendship always tend to rectify my various faults, by a discipline from which my pride will never suffer. I am glad to owe this to you, and it will always be a pleasure to me to acknowledge it.

Letter 55. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 17 September, 1845 (6 o'clock)*

I fear, dear and worthy friend, that I have pained you a little, or at least given you some anxiety, in allowing myself, yesterday, once or twice, to use to you the form of appellation which is generally reserved for the most complete intimacy. This sweet form of address, as I sincerely intend, may however serve to bring the perfect purity of my sentiments into accord with their more strongly-marked energy. But although, as a matter of fact, we are reciprocally united by the closest tie possible at present, the 'thou' and 'thee' are perhaps not sufficiently sympathetic with the present state of your heart.

So I feel a special need of expressing to you, on the subject, my natural regret, and of reassuring you for the future before you have expressed, even by silence, your decisive opinion. I should be specially sorry to make you think for a moment that the last crisis should have rendered me less respectful, when it has led me, on the contrary, to admire still more your altogether noble nature.

Farewell, my Clotilde, and forgive me; we shall meet on Friday evening.

Ever yours

A^{te} COMTE

Although I do not yet get enough sleep, I feel stronger and less agitated

* Tuesday morning in original; but Wednesday more likely.—Ed.

Letter 56. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 25 September, 1845

Good-morning, my dear philosopher, I send you 'the heart's gift' (*), made up in its natural shape; remembrance is the only artist capable of giving grace to such trifles. My own share consists in pleasing you and in being penetrated with the sincerity of your attachment, which I value at its full price. I leave you, however, for Æolus or Zephyr—I do not know very well which, but both of them help my lungs, and I wish to make use of them until the frosty season.

We shall meet to-morrow. I hold out my hand to you.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 57. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday morning, 25 September, 1845 (10 o'clock)

High-minded and charming friend, I am too much moved by what I have just read to tell you properly what I think of it. To-morrow I shall read it over again quietly, and I shall, if necessary, point out in a brotherly way, some expressions which I may then judge to be rather far-fetched. Allow me to-day only to protest against the name of that dear good philosopher of yours: although so far he has scarcely made his appearance, the name Sax (*saxum* is Latin for a stone) might make the classical reader anticipate in him a hardness quite unsuited to the character you have so happily portrayed. I do not as yet see anything but what is very satisfactory: the love of Wilhelmine and Stéphane seemed to me at first rather abruptly brought in, but on second thoughts I do not feel this quite so much.

My heart and mind are alike eager for the continuation which I am expecting. Still, I will not put off any longer the pleasure I feel in congratulating you on the noble inspiration of your heart, by which you have so early been led to devote your talent to upholding true social principles against the plausible common teachings of anarchy. As to myself, my beloved Clotilde, I must also express to you my personal gratitude for this sweet diversion. I was feeling yesterday, not exactly moral troubles, but some serious personal anxieties, a thing of

* A lock of her hair. This was lost in the post and another brought in its place.—See Letter 64.—*Ed.*

very rare occurrence with me. They have been much lessened by your dear visit, and your interesting composition has completely banished them, while it still adds to my respectful adoration. Farewell then, and once more thank you, my dear and eminent friend; we shall meet to-morrow evening, when I could not venture to express my sympathy and admiration to you so cordially.

Thine

A^{te}. COMTE

Letter 58. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 25 September, 1845

I am much concerned by what you say of your anxieties. I am afraid that your generosity towards us may have imposed sacrifices upon yourself. As regards the sum you lent me, I wish I were able to offer it back to you. Unfortunately I have used it partly in paying a debt that the state of my health had led me to contract. Still, I beg of you to tell me at once if these hundred francs would be useful to you now. I usually receive in January a present of money from my relations; and I might have it advanced. I beg of you, then, my dear friend, speak to me openly and affectionately. Follow my example in this matter.

I am happy to have your cordial approbation of my work. You will see the explanation of *Wilhelmine's* sentiments in the sequel of her story. This manner of introducing it is with the object of conforming to the style of journalistic writing. The moral will be developed in the plot, which I do not however wish to complicate.

Farewell, my dearest friend; I ask once again for your confidence with regard to the money.

Your affectionate

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 59. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 26 September, 1845 (2 o'clock)

Deeply touched, my excellent friend, by your second letter of yesterday, I am very sorry to have caused you an uneasiness as scrupulous as it is cordial, by using, in my haste, a wrong word—'anxiety' (*soucis*) instead of 'depression' (*ennui*). This is the frank explanation that you ask for on the subject.

I had resolved, about a year ago, as I believe I have told you, definitively to reduce to two thousand the annual allowance of three thousand francs which I make on account of an irrevocable, though voluntary, separation, an allowance which, for my position, had always been excessive in amount, and was besides ill-deserved. But so far I had not carried out this resolve. Now, a few hours before your adorable visit of the day before yesterday, I had at last just sent off notice of this, as coming into operation from the first of January next. However just and reasonable this measure may be, I have had the weakness to be much put out about it, simply because, for more than three years, habits will have been contracted which will now have to be modified. This is the only source of the slight pre-occupation, of which I have involuntarily suggested to you a false interpretation, which, to my great regret, alarms the admirable delicacy of my Clotilde.

Really, I hardly know to what *alleged* generosity you allude. If it is to the trifles of the sponsorship, I assure you that this little expenditure has only caused me a very precious satisfaction. As to the still less important matter with which you are personally concerned, so far from the repayment, about which you now seem so anxious, being of any immediate use to me, I reproach myself with not having specially invited you the day before yesterday, as I had intended, to give me a friendly preference, in case of any other similar need. Allow me to make use of the present occasion to repair a neglect which was caused by my being entirely engrossed throughout the whole of our most interesting conversation. I beg of you then, in general, to regard my purse as yours, since we are driven at last to pronounce the ugly name of the great goddess of to-day.

How real is our sympathy, my dearest Clotilde, and as pure as it is spontaneous! What happiness this precious affection promises, under one form or another, for the rest of my life! Yesterday, about noon, though neither of us was replying to the other, we were each reading an affectionate letter from the other. The sole motive of both these letters was the sweet longing to open our hearts to each other freely, for my part in which I make use of this opportunity to thank you. Further, I wish to express my pleasure at hearing of the beneficial morning walks. My advice has perhaps contributed to your taking them; at all events they indicate that you have at last become completely

conciled to life, and I should be glad to think that my deep attachment might have increased its value in your eyes.

Farewell, my adorable friend; forgive me for having involuntarily caused you, without sufficient reason, a temporary alarm. The remembrance of the incident cannot be so easily dismissed. I will always recall to me a spontaneous manifestation of your noble nature in a fresh and admirable aspect, by the exquisite enough over-scrupulous delicacy of which it supplies undoubted evidence. Farewell then, forgive me, and thank you; we shall meet this evening *en famille*. I am going to read *Wilhelmine* again, as a friendly critic. I cannot find language to tell you how much I love you.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 60. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday morning, 27 September, 1845

I have many things to thank you for, kind friend; and, as usual, more particularly for your affectionate attachment. I shall feel confidence in being able to have recourse to it when I feel the need: your way of obliging is sister to my way of obliging the obligation, and I shall never be afraid of conflict between the two. Can Monsieur M*— have been spreading any scandal about the letter of the 3rd of June? I should be very sorry if my civility to him was insufficient for the occasion. I felt some mischief latent when he shook hands on leaving.

It is quite impossible that *Wilhelmine* should not be exposed to danger. Your criticisms on her are perfectly just, and correspond with the corrections I was thinking of making. The progress of my work will have to suffer for my journey, but perhaps I may lay in a store of strength. You shall hear from me once, and I will arrange to be one of the company on Friday.

Farewell, my dearest friend, take care of yourself, and rely on my sympathy as well as on my affection.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 61. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 28 September, 1845 (9 o'clock)

At the instant when I am for the first time deprived for six whole days of your adorable presence, I feel, my Clotilde, a special

need to renew the expressions of my attachment to you. Besides, I owe you sincere gratitude for your amiable and spontaneous inclination to soften this absence by the promise of a letter, for which the non-existence of a post-office at Garges would prevent me from thanking you in time. None the less, I should be very sorry to make you in any way regret a valuable change, only too rare in the kind of life you lead, from which I even anticipate a happy influence on your physical condition.

Everything that I discover, little by little, in you, and about you, continually increases my respectful love. Thus, yesterday I began to see your situation under a new aspect, very fit to stimulate my constant tendency to be all in all to you, should need arise. The most tender language of the closest identification with you could only very feebly express the depth and purity of my devotion. In thinking of it again to-night, I have felt strongly what unspeakable happiness I should feel in sacrificing to you, if necessary, even my life, now that I have accomplished my principal task in the great human evolution.

Notwithstanding some recent signs, I should never have discovered the strange touchiness of your mother as it was revealed to me yesterday. However unjust this may be, I entirely approve of your noble and tender disposition to accommodate yourself to such a weakness, bearing in mind her many excellent qualities. You can easily have the orphan brought up by some eccentric aunt, even insinuating that a mother's influence would have sufficed to prevent the aberrations resulting from this exceptional education. By this the main purpose of your work would not suffer. If the conversation to-morrow conveniently affords me an opportunity of returning to the subject of this difficulty, I will try to bring reason to bear on it. But, since a certain literary rivalry is secretly mixed up with it, any lasting improvement is hardly to be hoped for. So, however we may groan over the necessity, you had better give in to this strange caprice of one whom you so rightly respect.

I am charmed that you appreciated my little suggestions on the details of *Wilhelmine*. Even if they had not appeared suitable to you, the superiority of your mental and moral nature would have assured me that I need have had no fear from a disagreement of such a kind.

Indeed, that our spontaneous agreement should extend to such subjects shows an interesting growth in our mutual sympathy.

As for Marrast, I have not yet had reason to suspect any indiscretion on his part towards my *Saint-Cloude*. Besides, since he knows nothing of me personally, he cannot have anything to do with certain gossip which I at first thought could only come from him.

Farewell, my beloved ; take care of your precious health. We shall meet on Friday evening. Always count on the full and unalterable devotion of your philosopher,

AL^{te} COMTE

During your stay at Garges shall you devote an instant to my little empty locket ?

Letter 62. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Garges, Tuesday morning, 30 September, 1845

MY DEAR CONSOLING FRIEND

I was present in spirit yesterday at your kind visit in the evening : it was a pleasure to me to think that I had, in the midst of my people, a devoted representative, and at the same time one deserving of every respect. The little storm of Saturday evening was partly forgotten by Sunday morning when I left for Garges, and I hope that you will have found no trace of it. They are good at heart, my mother above all. But they have passions, as those have whom they blame for them, and it seems to me that passions of all kinds must stifle, or greatly benumb, really generous feeling. I have not yet met in anyone but you so well-balanced a mind united with a heart craving so much for affection, so I am more and more penetrated with the idea that you are a perfect man. Why did I not know you sooner ? from how many sorrows I might perhaps have been saved, and how many fewer would have been the wounds to be healed ? But perhaps, on the contrary, I may have gained by this trial. It has relieved me from a load of enthusiastic ideas : I only fear that it may have killed my enthusiasm altogether. For all that, let us accuse no one. I shall always say the same : I would not for a fortune have been born elsewhere. I have seen ugly things below a beautiful exterior in many families. In mine, there is more than honour, there is integrity.

Here I am pampered and made as much of as if I were a

princess, and I am greatly edified by the affection displayed by my two hosts for each other. I dropped into a happy party of fifteen people, amongst whom there were some relations of the husband : they have told me some things about him, very highly to his credit and honour. He is richer than his wife, and had to overcome a thousand family difficulties in the way of his marriage. He is a really excellent young man, very pure and very tender. He fulfils his duties from religious feeling, and gratifies his tastes without transgressing a single commandment. Their house is as pleasant a one as could be desired, but, although they ask me to stay on with them until the 15th of November, when they go back to Paris, I shall return next Thursday. I should never get through with my work here ; and then I find the atmosphere somewhat chilling.

I like to think that you are quite well, and that you still find the rue Pavée to your liking ; they only dread the show of your partiality ; they will always tolerate more easily the underlying feeling.

My dearest friend, you have shown me so much benevolence that I dare to try it once again. You have offered me your purse : I shall be rich in January ; if you will help me on till then by lending me a hundred francs, you will do me a favour. You understand that this time I ask of you the *nec plus ultra* of my wants, do not, then, offer me any more, and above all, do not offer me the whole amount at once if it should inconvenience you. I should wish to make *Wilhelmine* valuable enough to be able to pass from the literary supplement into the hands of a publisher. Your affection gives me strength and courage. If I succeed, I shall not forget how much I owe to you in the renewal of my powers.

I suffered again from my palpitations for the whole of one night, through having slept with the window closed ; the fresh air, however, soon revived me, but I require a great deal of it still.

Farewell, my very dear philosopher, we shall meet on Friday : rely upon my affection, as I rely upon yours. Whatever may happen to you, I shall sympathise with you, as you sympathise in all my concerns, and I shall have another pleasure more than you have, that of gratitude.

If anything occurs to change the arrangement of Saturday evening with regard to the opera, I shall be quite ready to begin. It will be sufficient if you have made everything right. My

mother, who has no memory, was speaking to me of going to Versailles in the course of the week, this is what makes me suppose that there might be some change, my sister-in-law having very little time at her disposal.

Farewell once more, take care of yourself, and be as happy as it is possible to be in this vale of tears, as Mother Stanislas says.

I offer you my hand tenderly.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 63. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday, 2 October, 1845 (mid-day)

The passing trial resulting from your short absence has enabled me to appreciate, my adorable friend, to what a degree you have become necessary to me. You cannot conceive what a painful void I have felt during these few days in thinking that we were no longer in the same neighbourhood, and that I could no longer go to you in case of need, or even communicate with you speedily by letter. But all these sufferings were dissipated yesterday, in reading your charming letter of the day before, happily the longest with which you have as yet favoured me, which announces your return for to-day.

I am very much touched by the indulgent appreciation that I owe to your friendship. Alas! no one knows better than myself how far I am from being perfect. But I have at least the somewhat rare advantage of being well acquainted with my principal imperfections and, what is still rarer, the will to diminish them little by little, by exercising over myself a continual active discipline, in which, for the future, your precious influence will help me very much, and this even when you are not aware of it.

I must, besides, my Clotilde, declare to you how much I appreciate the regret you at last express on your own account, that our pure friendship had not an earlier commencement. For how many reasons we have cause to regret that your brother did not introduce us to each other at the earliest possible opportunity, without waiting for our acquaintance to begin so late by an accidental circumstance! but let us abstain from the contemplation of an irrevocable past, and rather turn our attention to what remains for us in the future. Let us love one another deeply, each in our own manner, and we shall yet be really

happy in one another. Whilst I am delighted to allow to you an equal share with myself of sympathy, I cannot, all the same, grant you exclusively—to adopt your charming phrase—the pleasure of gratitude, and I claim to have a still greater share in it than you. If I have happily helped to reconcile you to life, am I not indebted to you for having at least known its principal attraction? Thanks to you, my need of affection is no longer reduced to a vague and insufficient nourishment resulting from the universal love of Humanity. Besides, this feeling, far from suffering in the least for my private adoration towards so worthy an object, is indeed constantly stimulated by it. Can I ever be too grateful for so immense a moral benefit, one so happily realised, at the very time when my life seemed almost condemned to an irrevocable solitude! If my gratitude for this benefit chiefly consists in loving you and identifying myself with you, ah! be assured, my adored Clotilde, of an ample and eternal recompense!

My health continues to improve, without as yet being really good. Though the convulsive agitation has almost disappeared, sleep (unless considered by its total duration, which is already pretty nearly normal) remains still broken and even disturbed, but in reality this irregularity procures me the sweet compensation of multiplying my inmost acts of adoration towards you: because for more than four months I have never once either gone to sleep or awakened without spontaneously consecrating to you my last and my first thoughts. Circumstances connected with business having obliged me to prolong my last interval of leisure, I found myself so much the better for it that I am voluntarily taking another. I had really set to work much too soon after our crisis of September, which has shaken me much more deeply than I thought at first.

As you expected, I did not find on Monday any trace of Saturday's difficulties, so that I could not well revert, as I told you on Sunday that I would do, to your mother's strange susceptibility on the subject of *Wilhelmine*. Whilst I was pleased with the kind reception they gave me, I was led to feel, apart from love, how indispensable you are to me in this family circle, where, in your absence, the care of sustaining and animating the conversation, in the midst of funereal or soporific darkness, depends mostly on your brother's spirit of contradiction.

The opera season opens this evening with *I Puritani*. But

the real opening for me will consist in taking you there. This as you suggest, might come about the day after to-morrow. However, you know well enough that even though my heart be deprived of this incomparable satisfaction, I shall always have a real and direct pleasure in honouring and pleasing your mother as well as in repaying, however inadequately, my immense musical debt to your sister-in-law.

I thank you for having accepted, with frank cordiality, a general offer, which is so natural between us: it is only in such cases that communism is a benefit, and in this sense it is as old as Humanity. I shall always be ready to give you what you ask for, and will not in future exceed it. If at first I acted otherwise, it was certainly not done through any vain ostentation, or even indiscreet generosity, but merely from the very legitimate fear that an unreflecting delicacy or want of confidence should prevent you from declaring the extent of your needs. I hope I may not have to postpone my pleasure in handing you this until your kind visit of Wednesday next: I will do what I can to take advantage of the first moment we are alone, either to-morrow, if there is an opportunity, or better still, the day after, if I have the pleasure of taking you to the opera.

Your description of your hosts at Garges is delightful. The peculiar circumstances of their married life, since not based on any questions of money, speak strongly in favour of both of them, and your appreciation, the justice and kindness of which are equally clear to me, has already succeeded in making me respect them both. I forgive them for having wished to deprive me of you for six weeks, because it proves that they have rightly appreciated you. Besides, your indications with regard to them may become directly useful to me; for, since they seem to suit your family, there may probably be during the winter constant intercourse between them, in which case I might, as a supplementary member, find myself sometimes included: to this I would willingly agree, from what you tell me of them.

Farewell, my dearest friend, I look forward to clasping your hand to-morrow with all affection.

Meantime, accept a chaste brotherly kiss from

Your philosopher

Ate COMTE

When I heard on Monday evening that you had arranged to go off a day earlier, I was very little surprised when I remembered

what had taken place last Saturday. But when I thought about the letter that I wrote to you on Sunday morning, I was none the less disappointed, and even made anxious, by the sudden modification of the plan you had when I left you. You ought to have had this letter to read before you went away, whereas it could only have been delivered through the post at your house two hours after your departure. The various chances of mishap that its prolonged sojourn with your porter might occasion until your return, have made me so anxious that I can only be fully reassured in the matter on receiving the special assurance from you that this letter has reached you at last without any accident.

Letter 64. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday morning, 4 October, 1845

In order to complete my week of *far niente*, I will come and see you to-morrow,* my dear friend. I will bring you the 'heart's gift' myself, since the post takes upon itself to play the part of a duenna. Moreover, I must now thank you from the depths of my heart for the touching services you have rendered me.

Yesterday, I made you a sort of official report on the unfortunate scene of Saturday. I had my reasons for speaking to you of it before my mother, because she sharply reproached me with being at the bottom of it. She accuses me, of course without the least foundation, of having been the cause of coldness between my brother and yourself. I should be very glad if you would once more express the sympathy and interest you feel in him, and I assure you that he has not ceased to deserve them. His nature would instinctively draw him towards you, even if he wished to remove himself from your influence, which he is far from being inclined to do. Make all possible allowances for everything and everybody ; it is only my misfortunes that have delivered me from my greatest weaknesses, and I still have many left.

I have again read with respect and affection your two kind letters, and I thank you for them. I already owe you much solace of heart, and I am very happy to brighten your life in such a pleasant manner. Let us walk leaning upon one another, my

* Image of 5 October, 1845.—Ed.

dear philosopher ; let time guide and fashion us. At certain moments I compare myself to a chrysalis : it seems to me that I am being transformed in the same lugubrious fashion, leaving behind me as miserable a garment. I shall take up again with much pleasure my work upon *Wilhelmine* : I hope I shall not give offence to anyone in following my own plan of ideas ; perhaps I may be useful. The sorrows of eccentricity seem to me to result much more from education than from nature, and the women of to-day are generally brought up badly.

But I wander. Farewell, my very kind friend, continue to love me, and rely upon my love. I clasp your hand affectionately.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 65. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday, 7 October, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

Your kindness and devotion to me give you the fullest right to my confidence ; and if I have not explained to you sooner why I had recourse to your obliging generosity, it was partly to let you have the more merit in it.

Now, as to my people and myself, I am very happy to let you into my private affairs, but at the same time I do not wish to run the risk of making you anxious about them.

For the last three years my mother's brother has been giving me as a New Year's gift, 800 francs, which serves to cover part of my expenses during the year. Out of this sum my mother allows me 300 francs, she paying my rent, and my board at my brother's. All of them occasionally assist me by little presents, so that materially I am not at all badly off. This year, though I have not been ill, or under treatment, I have had to take great care of myself, and I found myself ruined before the time : and, if I had not considered you as the best of men, I should have asked help from my family instead of coming to you : this is my little history. I should not wish you to think me a spendthrift, nor to make you in any way doubtful of the real goodness of my family. They have all given way to many of my wishes, which must really have been troublesome to them to carry out. The only thing I can reproach them with is that they desire to limit my intellectual freedom. But I am always coming back to the same moral : everyone has his defects and weaknesses. Do not, however, imagine you are here

included: I feel that you are very superior in many ways, and you are the kind of friend that I have always wished to possess. I hope the difficulties of my position do not make you fancy that I value your affection the less. There are no straits, however dire, which could induce me to attach myself where I should feel out of place: to reckon the cost of relief would be worse than to suffer the evil.

My mother only goes to-morrow, and all the others are as pleasant as can be to me. Even a mother's worship is very injurious to a man. Had my brother been less indulgently brought up he might have been a really superior man.

We shall meet on Friday and Saturday, my dearest friend; to-morrow I shall work, one does nothing at all by beginning afresh. I should like to be six months older, to have written two interesting novels, and to be able to say 'I will.' Is not that an ugly expression? but I shall never say it except to myself.

Take good care to keep yourself well: there is a heart that is much interested in your well-being.

I offer you my hand

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 66. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday, 8 October, 1845 (2 p.m.)

Before receiving your pleasant letter of yesterday evening, I had already intended, beloved one, to write to you to-day, for no other reason than to wile away the interval between our two weekly interviews, and thus make up, as far as possible, for your usual welcome visit. But besides this, I must now tell you how much I am touched by this interesting statement of your circumstances, though your recent appeal to my friendly help scarcely required, in my opinion, any private explanation. Especially do I thank you for having confided this to me after a time which enables me to keep for myself any merit there may be in this trifling act of friendship. If you alone were able to think of this delicate act, I am able, on my side, fully to appreciate its delightful grace.

This, my adorable Clotilde, like other previous incidents, makes me feel that, as our intimacy develops and becomes stronger, so it brings me not only happiness but improvement also. I have already sufficiently explained to you its valuable

action on my mind, an action so happily in accordance with the general character, more affective than speculative, which now shows itself as distinguishing the second half of my philosophical career. But I have not hitherto had the opportunity of specially thanking you for your influence on my own moral improvement, about which there is even less doubt. Since I feel myself inspired by the love, as noble as it is tender, to which you permit me henceforth to give its proper name, I feel that I have become better, juster towards all men. It has increased my attachment to my true friends, and even softened my feeling towards my principal opponents. I have become gentler with those placed under, and more submissive to those over me ; in a word, it inspires me with more love for all my duties whatsoever. Allow me to lay at your feet this sweet recognition of the valuable progress which is due not only to the nature of my feelings for you, but also to the noble and pure mind of her whom I adore.

With what admirable delicacy of feeling are you able to soften your just grievances against your family in order to put forward all the better their real good qualities. For on the whole, I am of your opinion with regard to them. I have often told you, my Clotilde, how really fortunate you are in your family, in every relationship ; and I am happy to see that you have a proper sense of this immense advantage, one which only a comparison with other families could enable you to appreciate fully. I thoroughly agree with you on the natural ability of your brother to rise to a higher standard, had he been, as you so well put it, more vigorously brought up ; for he sufficiently fulfilled the necessary condition for such a position in regard to strong intellect and high mind. His worst flaws, even intellectual, are especially due to the incurable conceit developed by his mother's worship of him. Yesterday I was glad to be able to congratulate him, with the exception of some superfluous long periods, on his noble and memorable letter to your worthy uncle in Austria. It was also most pleasant to me when I informed him of my intention to do further public justice to his mathematical work by giving in the second edition, a proper development to the little-anticipated prefatory letter which I wrote to him by way of encouragement, even before his first pamphlet was published, and when his project only existed in his own eyes as a rather inchoate germ.

Persevere, my dear friend, in your steady work inspired by the firm conviction of having taken up a really useful task, and

without troubling yourself about the details of publication. Let us hope that this time Marrast will be able to understand and to support you : but we must insist as far as possible, on its appearing at first in the *National*, which would make a regular edition much easier. But, however useful in many ways this introduction might be, we must not, however, consider it indispensable. If he fails you, as past experience may make us fear, I believe that we might be able to do without him, and I will do my best to find a publisher. Indeed, my love for you has given me the idea of an exceptional plan, and on thinking it seriously over, I have been brought to think it will be specially effective. Allow me to keep back details of this plan for the case of non-acceptance by the *National*, all the more so that, in that event, I shall have had more time to think it out ; but I have already great confidence in it. So, think only of making your work quite worthy of you, and, I venture to add, of

Your devoted philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Our mutual sincerity emboldens me, dearest friend, openly to ask a favour of you which I might possibly obtain by a graduated series of indirect solicitations not very worthy of our respective natures. The permission to address you privately as *tu* instead of *vous*, used with due moderation, would, I own, be unutterably precious to me, even if your own feelings, at the present time, prevented you from giving this concession the full value it would have if reciprocated. I have already such an unconscious tendency to drift into it that it has now become a really heart-felt want in order better to express the depth of my affection without taking anything from its essential purity. But this permission would, in my eyes, lose its true value if it cost you any painful effort. So, if you have at present the slightest repugnance to this permission, do not hesitate to delay it further. And to make this easier, do not answer unless affirmatively. You have only to keep silent on the subject, and I shall be sufficiently warned that my request seems either indiscreet or premature, and I shall then have no hesitation in keeping to my present form of address without complaint, either direct or indirect, until a riper future.

Farewell, my dear friend, until the evening of the day after to-morrow, and especially until our first Saturday, when I hope we shall hear Persiani in the delightful *Lucia*.

Letter 67. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 9 October, 1845

DEAR FRIEND

It will be very delightful if you will call me Clotilde : it will be your privilege as my protector, and it is with tender feeling that I grant it you. As to addressing me as *tu* instead of *vous*, I must own that I have always had a feeling against this mode of address, and it would greatly impair the harmony of our intercourse. At present there is more gratitude than graciousness in my heart : you must excuse this, for I cannot help it.

I thank you for your plans in regard to the appearance of *Wilhelmine*. I am full of hope that the *National* will take what I write in that way. I bungled about my weekly contribution, and that is what made it rather awkward for Monsieur M. to mention it to me. When I see the trash of every kind which is published during the parliamentary season, I have been sorry not to have been able to squeeze in, and to gain a little money in that paper. If my articles are returned, you will see that their principal faults were being rather bold and too frank : but that is done, and we will say no more about it.

My mother went off this morning somewhat smoothed down, but still cold towards me. The discontent with one another, though shut up in our hearts, is, I am sure, as painful to me as to her. It is the first time that the angularities of our sex have met, so that it is our first serious battle.

I have taken up my pen again to-day. There is so little strength in my poor head that the least shock gives me a great shaking, and the reaction brings on a fit of the spleen. However, I think I have got over the worst part of my life, and I am very glad that I am able to leap out of the rut. Misfortune is a challenge which ends by fastening on pride, which itself ends by mastering all the other faculties. It is thus that most of the bumps we get only disappear to make room for others, and that most of us are so different at death from what we were at birth.

Farewell, till Friday, my very dear philosopher ; I am as happy as a child at the prospect of Saturday evening. I should like to have the soul of Rossini without his bodily ailments.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE

Letter 68. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 10 October, 1845 (7 o'clock)

Although you claim, my dearest friend, to have given up graciousness, there could not have been more of it in your refusal. I am, moreover, very much touched by your charming frankness ; for my request had really no other essential purpose than that of discovering on this point how you actually felt about the question, so that I might behave accordingly by dropping henceforth any useless attempts. The permission you grant in its stead, of course, only goes as far as to authorise an already admitted custom between us : yet I acknowledge with tender gratitude the direct consecration you freely allow. I can only hope that the permission Clotilde has given for this sweet term of address may soon be completed by her venturing to give simply the name of Auguste to the devoted *protector* whom she still ceremoniously calls Monsieur Comte ! However, call me as you please : so long as your affection is equal to mine I shall cease to haggle about forms of address. Now that you understand the extent of my wishes in regard to the terms of affection, it is for me quietly to await the modifications which time may bring in this respect, to the promptings of your own heart, without wanting to hasten them by importunate urgings likely to annoy my beloved.

I am glad that you have set to work again on *Wilhelmine*, though somewhat uneasy on account of the weary head which has resulted from this first return to work. I am always thinking of the words which your mother told me on Saturday that you had let drop, and I am not quite comforted by the explanation you gave of them on Sunday. I beg you, my Clotilde, never to hesitate to leave off writing as soon as you feel this tendency to depression, which cannot conduce to good results, especially in your kind of work, where there must be no trace of effort. However important this work may be in order to ensure your rightful personal independence, you are not at piece-work : so profit wisely by this valuable freedom as regards time, never rhyming *invita Minerva*.

I do not think you should make too much of the rather hostile attitude shown by your mother when she left. With the dignified deference towards her which the tact of your excellent disposition will always prompt, the really defective energy of her will and the gentle firmness of your wise resolution will gradually suffice to give you due freedom actually, if not formally. As to your relations with the uncle in Austria, have they never been

direct? and might you not, if necessary, dispense with your mother as an intermediary, without any unpleasant disagreement?

I should have replied to your charming letter as soon as I received it yesterday, if I had not then been taken up with reading the part your brother had brought me on Tuesday of the work on which he is engaged, and on this I was thus able to concentrate four hours of conscientious attention, though I was rather tired after it. Between ourselves, Clotilde, though he has set to work on a question scarcely yet ripe for it, he has been able to make a new application, of doubtful certainty yet interesting, of my general philosophy. Here, as in his mathematical work, he has merged the principal idea by an ill-conceived general view, full of objectionable prolixity, and too often written in a tone of presumption which has a bad effect. When I give him back the manuscript this evening, I shall add a short private note, and if he does not frankly follow the advice contained in it, probably *Littre* will never be able to make up his mind to give it serious consideration, and no review will dare to publish it. Yet it has a certain amount of real value, so that if vanity does not prevent him from working it up into a better form, it might be of real use to him, especially in gaining the esteem of one with such great power of appreciation. I need hardly say that it will be well to be discreet with regard to this candid opinion of mine.

Good-bye till this evening, dear friend, and again till to-morrow*: it is pleasant to see my noble Clotilde become a child again for a short time. Besides, there is no necessity to have Rossini's calculus along with his musical soul. For myself, I feel already an almost childish joy at the pleasure which you will have to-morrow through

Your most devoted philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 69. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 14 October, 1845 (7 o'clock)

In the name of our friendship, I beg of you, Clotilde, to stop all work until you have had a serious talk with your doctor about what happened on Saturday. Although, since then, you have felt renewed intellectual activity, this itself may be an

* Image of 11 October, 1845.—Ed.

untoward symptom if it is connected with the excitement resulting from the brain shock. In any case, you are certainly increasing the evil by giving way to this deceptive facility. It is true that there are examples as celebrated as they are authentic which show that such shocks may have a good effect morally and physically, but you know that one must not expect such an exceptional result, which mostly happens in very early life. I do not wish to alarm you without reason with regard to an occurrence which may turn out to be as trifling as is ordinarily the case, yet you must not for that neglect any reasonable precaution, especially such as medical advice. As the doctor will be coming to-day to see your sister-in-law, there will be no excuse for your not speaking to him then about yourself. If your brother should, however, not send for him to see his wife, you must not hesitate to go yourself to the doctor, and explain to him carefully the results of the shock, not omitting to mention your painful dreams and yesterday's hæmorrhage. How I wish that I could fitly go instead of you!

I am looking forward, my Clotilde, to to-morrow's pleasant weekly visit, supposing you are not unable to go out, nor kept in on Félicie's account. My passing fit of depression will make this happiness still more precious than usual. You may have observed yesterday that my new professional arrangements give us henceforth our Wednesdays perfectly free. If other engagements of the same kind oblige me to give up usually a part of that day, you may rely that the other part (from 12 to 4), in which I receive your pleasant visits, will always remain consecrated to them.

Farewell, my adorable friend, do not forget that my peace depends much on your health. Deign to receive on your beautiful brow a chaste kiss from the lips of your philosopher

ATÉ COMTE

Letter 70. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday, 14 October, 1845

My kind friend, do not be anxious about my skull: the effects of the shock are going off, and to-morrow, on my way to you, I shall call at the doctor's. I should like to return to you all the kind interest you take in me. Unfortunately, I am only a mite compared to you, and I must needs be content with

king on. If thought can take the place of action in such a case, mine is often at work for you ; but all that I can say is that I am doing more than an affectionate chatter.

There was no need this morning to do anything more for Marie than give her her breakfast ; the poor girl has had a severe initiation into motherhood—fortunately she is strong.

Good-bye till to-morrow, my dear friend. Do not trouble yourself about the day of my visit, and do not let it interfere with your arrangements ; I could go to see you just as well at any other time, so you are quite free. I feel for your business worries from the bottom of my heart. I know what it must cost you to have to come down from the realms of thought to the mill below. That is the *crux* of high minds. But if resignation is the most reasonable of virtues, especially is it so where one is facing the impossible.

Farewell again, keep well, and do not allow yourself to be depressed nor to be dominated by that wretched sensitiveness which does so much harm to the common weal : I might say to anything.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 71. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning (9.30) 16 October, 1845

DEAR FRIEND

I feel so thoroughly unfit that I was coming to try and recover myself a little in your company. Just look at the letter which my mother has written to me ! Her anger against me seems to become chronic. I went to rue Pavée to ask for an explanation, for it is there that all this wretched pettiness is brewed. I am thoroughly disgusted with this way of living. Could I not manage to find employment while continuing to write ? I could easily write seven letters a day ; so that if I could find some secretarial work it would help me out of the ditch. You said that you only begin your work again to-morrow. If you felt strong enough as I were coming back, to come and have a talk with me, I would be in for you.* My head has been bad all night, so at 6 o'clock sent for my doctor : he told me to try a little arnica before terminating on a slight letting of blood.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE.

* Image of 16 October, 1845.—Ed.

Letter 72. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday evening, 18 October, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I would much rather have gone to pass this evening by your fireside than write to you as I now do from mine. I have stayed at home to escape the emotions which lie in wait for me rather than to nurse my head, which my doctor did not find in a sufficiently bad state for him to be obliged to bleed me. He assures me that I need not fear any evil results, and he puts down to the shock the very great difficulty I find in any occupation ; if, however, this goes on, I am to put four leeches behind my ear to finish with it. So you, who take such a frank interest in my double life, what do I not owe you, dear friend ? I am very clumsy at expressing my gratitude, after the fashion of people who are suffering, but I do not for that feel any the less. Let me have news of yourself from time to time through the post : your letters always give me pleasure and do me good.

I hope that on Monday I shall be able to take up my pen again, never to leave it. The episode I mentioned to you, I shall take for the subject of a story. It is one of the most dramatic that one can adapt to our times. *Wilhelmine* will remain as an instance of the misfortunes coming from mere eccentricity. By making her quite unlike myself, I think I shall do enough to pass the *ensorship*. You once asked me, dear friend, if my mother knew of the saddest phase of my life. I remember that I did not answer, which entitles you almost to an apology. I have never been able to speak on this painful subject with anyone but her, and that outpouring did me no good.

Farewell, dear man ; love me, and be assured that I will do as much for you. I clasp your hand tenderly.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 73. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 19 October, 1845 (10 o'clock)

This morning, dearest friend, I am sending Sophie to get exact news about your being let blood yesterday, and the general state of your health, which is so dear to me. She has also been instructed to bring back information about your mother's return, so as to save you the trouble of writing to me. If your health did require regular nursing, I hope you would not hesitate to look

Sophie as being quite as much in your service as mine : this excellent woman might even from to-day fulfil the duties of nursing, and no one could be more competent. You will already tell Clotilde, that my anxiety about you is one of the most rightful privileges of the tender guardianship that you have freely conferred upon me.

My not going to the Italian opera allowed me to devote yesterday evening to carefully reading your sad packet of papers, which I will return to you on Wednesday, if, as I hope, nothing prevents your cherished weekly visit. Though a creature of this kind could never have deserved the good fortune that he obtained in his marriage, yet he* seems to me on the whole more unfortunate than guilty. As far as I can probe a character which is always aiming at theatrical effect, I consider that he only became completely degraded towards the end, when he had become hardened to the natural result of his conduct. He grades his temptations to suicide too much for him to have yielded to them. Yet there is every reason to believe that in some way or other his deplorable life came to an end at least two or three years ago. A sentence in his last letter but one, might make one believe that he finally became a soldier, either in Prussia or in Holland, if the general impression one gets of his story did not seem opposed to this idea. Perhaps one might especially look to the Islands of Bourbon and Mauritius for evidence of the end, supposing that he went there either to renew some old acquaintance or perhaps to try what he could do in a place for which he seemed to have had a hankering. In case no enquiries have been made in this direction, will you allow me to try what I can do in it? However painful it be to read these papers, I must have the courage to do it once more in order to serve you better.

All this has naturally revived the deep impression made on me by the touching story of your *Lucie*, especially from the overwhelmingly greater interest one feels in real events over those of even the most powerful fiction. To-day, as hitherto, and even more so, I thus come, my Clotilde, to feel more completely all the duties of my affection for you. They seem to me already most happily summed up by the noble position of guardianship which you have freely bestowed upon me. Such a relationship to you is all the more precious that it will always remain compatible with the inestimable lot which is my final

* Monsieur de Vaux.—*Ed.*

ambition, by the side of her whom my respectful affection will never cease to regard as my only true wife.

In one of the most charming of your letters, you recently compared the present workings of your soul to the deep-seated changes in a chrysalis. I also, my beloved, feel in my way a similar renovation. For several months past, and now especially, it seems to me that in every respect, I am beginning a second existence, one both purer and fuller than that from which you have raised me. All the different aspects of it will be more firmly bound together by its spontaneous concentration round a high object of love, for this was always wanting as the mainspring of my first life. Under this powerful impulsion, looking always to its effect upon you, everything will become sweet and easy, even to the exertions which my material position will doubtless require of me for a time. The new energy thus regularly developed in me will, moreover, allow me to direct the whole of my continuous activity in such wise that the philosophical elaboration so dear to me, will, I hope, sustain no serious delay as a consequence of this position, even should it continue longer than I think likely.

Farewell, my adorable *Lucie*, until to-morrow evening, unless you are unable to get out. May your pretty hand feel already the tender and chaste pressure of that of your dear philosopher.

A^{te}. COMTE

Letter 74. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday evening, 19 October, 1845

I feel sure that the letter Sophie handed you this morning has already partly answered that which you wrote to me shortly before. Yet I think it well to complete my answer to it by this post, since my dear friend encourages me so kindly to write to her often. Moreover, it will be very pleasant for me thus to employ some more of this sacred day of rest, which I like, as much as possible, to pass entirely at my fireside, now that my vocations oblige me to go out every other day of the week.

If I had been your doctor, I should not have hesitated to have let you a little blood yesterday : but his decision must be respected, I will not say blindly, but at least for a time. If, moreover, you

ve quite decided, as you say, to try four leeches the next time you have trouble with your head, the doctor's want of energy will not, I hope, cause any serious inconvenience, though you have now been suffering for a week, which is a long time in such a case.

I am delighted by the wise literary decision you have taken regard to your interesting *Wilhelmine*. The episode which you had thought of introducing was too important in itself not to deserve the honour of a separate story. Introducing it into *Wilhelmine* might also have interfered with the esthetic unity of the story; for the painful period of your life fortunately shows some of the essential signs of the eccentricity which you so justly probate. By this excellent solution of all difficulties you will now be able to avoid wounding susceptibilities which you have not taken into account, however utterly unjust they be. Your philosopher is almost ashamed not to have thought of this expedient in his active solicitude for you. Yet he thus has all the more pleasure in congratulating the happy womanly tact of his beloved. Here, also, Clotilde, you can see the general moral, at even unreasonable criticism may turn out useful to authors of well-balanced minds.

As Sophie has informed me of your mother's return, I feel, indeed, that you may be going through possibly serious trouble even while I am writing this. However, the respectful firmness of your loving nature, together with the peace-making efforts of your excellent father, give me some comfort. I hope, then, I shall find to-morrow evening that your position with regard to her has become natural again, though this deep disagreement suggests continued watchfulness henceforth. Nevertheless I shall not feel comforted in this matter until reassured by your own words, perhaps while escorting you back home, or on some other opportune occasion.

I thank you most warmly for having told me that you had made your mother acquainted with the most secret episodes of your past, and I am not surprised that this painful avowal was so well received. My hearty solicitude for you has then nothing more of essential to know on this subject, unless it be the place and the exact time of the event, for which I shall patiently wait, as in other things, for the free confidence of my dear friend.

Yours for life

A^{te} COMTE

*Letter 75. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX**(Delayed in the post, and delivered only while Auguste Comte was writing Letter 77 q.v.)*

Sunday evening (10 o'clock) 19 October, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I must give you an account of the day's events. My mother had not yet come when Sophie, whom you had been kind enough to send, arrived, and so I could say nothing to her except my good wishes for you. A few minutes before that my brother came, with whom all was very satisfactory : as to my mother, she was as natural and as pleasant as if all had gone smoothly between us. She brought subjects up again with the same bias, yet without any bitterness, and so our present relations, if not satisfactory, are at least tolerable. But if I had not been bold enough to speak out, the discussion would never have ended. So I am pleased with my severe attitude, instead of regretting it.

I have been well all the day, but this evening my head is on fire : so I shall give my feet a scalding in the hope of being able to set to work to-morrow. Why will not people be satisfied with the evils they cannot avoid ; and whence comes the mad anxiety of each group to keep a good stock of that evil drug fault-finding ? I have always kept in mind the charming philosophical view which one finds in 'the miller, his son, and the ass,' and I have often resolved to stick to it as far as possible. In this world one only ought to talk when one cannot help it : our tongue plays us strange tricks.

I am sure you would have been as pleased as my brother was with the delightful treat he had last night, my dear friend. He came back in raptures about the heavenly singer, and for my part, I am very glad that the pleasure he had was owing to your kindness.

Take care of yourself. Sophie tells me that you still sleep badly. I am sorry for it, more on account of the bad days than of the bad nights.

My doctor finds me much stronger : he says it is quite possible that I may be quite strong in a year or two. This is thanks to my diet, which I have changed from light to stronger meat.

Farewell, dearest friend, till to-morrow. Believe always in my gratitude as in my affection.

Yours very cordially

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Your opinion of the *fatal man* seems to me the right one. He was a sort of dark distortion of Gil Blas.

Letter 76. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday afternoon, (1-30 o'clock) 20 October, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

Perhaps you have already received my letter of yesterday evening: I have come, though not very sure if I should find you at home, but also with the object of exercise, because, even to-day, I am not in a fit state for much work. I shall go on with the reaction through my feet. I am getting a little better every day, but I see that though I have had a nervous shock, it will not have any bad result. I enclose a letter for you to read which my mother left for me this morning, and that has done me great good. I sent back a few lines expressive of the love I have for her, in spite of our little disagreements and of our different dispositions.

I shall perhaps not be able to come and see you on Wednesday: but we shall meet this evening as usual. My very best wishes, and pray believe in my affection. I should not like to be sentenced to write with your pen for an hour. How clever you must be to turn out such fine work with it.

C. V.

Letter 77. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 21 October, 1845 (2 o'clock)

I am so uneasy at the sudden mishap which made you pass yesterday evening so differently from your expectations of a few hours before, that I send you this by Sophie in order to have speedy news of you without obliging you to take up your pen too soon. Though your mother had told me for you, and I must say very pleasantly, that you would write to me this morning, I am in fear lest your health should forbid your making such an effort. However, I am glad to hear that, at last, you have had recourse to leeches; while regretting that you did not do so a week earlier, I yet hope that this treatment was applied in time.

So this is the second time in a few days that I have lost by accident one may say, the visit of my beloved! but at least I had yesterday the small consolation of attributing my absence in the daytime to a regular engagement of which I recently told you, though you may well be excused for having forgotten it. So I take this opportunity of noting in writing that it is only on

Monday and Friday (our two regular days for interviews) that my daily work begins at 1-30 : while on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays I get there at 9 a.m., and this on Monday also, when I am engaged morning and afternoon ; this arrangement leaves me Wednesdays as well as Sundays entirely free. When my official work will further restrict my leisure time, I will make you a further list of the hours when I am free. I may say that I never go out now without telling Sophie of the time when I expect to be home, in order that, in a case such as yesterday, you may, if you please, wait for me, being as free here as in your other home.

The letter you wrote me yesterday on my own writing-table, while reviling the pen which I now hold with so much pleasure, makes me uneasy about your letter of Sunday evening, which did not arrive yesterday, either before or after your visit. Though I have never yet lost anything in the post, I was beginning to fear that this was a fatal exception. But I have just been obliged to suspend the pleasure of writing to you for the still greater pleasure of reading your letter ; for it has arrived at last, bearing an official stamp, explaining the accidental delay. My fear is then at an end, but I would propose, in order to prevent a recurrence of it, that we should each number our letters in the order of their dispatch ; I have already, from the beginning, marked the order in which yours have been received ; beginning from to-day, I would point out that this is the 42nd letter I have had the pleasure of writing to you, inclusive of my first short note which I sent you with *Tom Jones* ; that which you wrote here yesterday is your 34th, and I mark as 35th your letter of Sunday evening, for though written before the other, it only arrived after it. We should only have to compare the receipt numbers with the dispatch numbers to detect any postal irregularity. Indeed, the only letter of mine that you have not yet answered is that in which I answered on Sunday evening yours of Saturday evening ; you probably only received it yesterday morning.

Having thus settled the various details of our home lives, I begin by expressing my thanks and admiration for the charming way in which you wrote on Sunday evening about my sleeplessness, saying that you deplored it more for my days than for my nights. In no language am I aware of an expression so tender, delicate, and gracious at the same time that its truth is so happily put. For, indeed it is during this delightful sleeplessness that I feel how much I love you, that I pass so many delicious hours in

thinking of you and sometimes uttering affectionate words to you. I am then almost as happy as when reading your letters, when writing to you: there is no greater happiness than this for me, save when I am looking at you during the free outpourings of our pure affection. Ah! that I could thus employ my life, except the time consecrated to the great things that still have to do in the service of Humanity!

I am not less satisfied than you are with the happy ending, for the present at least, of your recent family dissensions, and I congratulate you sincerely on your general conduct in this matter; for without your tactful energy you could not have reached this result. Although the affection of your mother at last prevailed, your letter shows clearly that she is in the main animated by the same suspicions against you. This fluctuating attitude seems to me attributable to the unseen influence of your worthy father, and it is doubtless to him that you are indebted for this unexpected yielding. This is why I took pains yesterday to get him to talk about the campaigns so dear to him, after he had frankly accepted my standing invitation to the Italian Opera.

You were quite right in anticipating how pleased I was at the pleasant musical treat I was able to give your brother: he thanked me heartily for it yesterday. I hope that I shall be able to give him further opportunities of hearing our divine Persiani. How glad am I to have, thanks to you, thought at last of securing a second ball, which allows me so easily to give pleasure to many friends. Next year I am obliged to cut down a few personal expenses, and will not be in this direction. Moreover, even unconsciously, these noble esthetic emotions can hardly fail to have a gradually softening effect on your brother's feelings, even towards us.

Your mother's kindly occupations at Versailles have led to my intimacy with an elderly amateur painter, who would like to make an oil sketch of you. I must, my beloved, implore you to allow this, for perhaps I am speaking in my own interest. If that could only induce your mother to carry out the happy thought she expressed in regard to a beautiful portrait of you a few days after Felicie's confinement!

I cannot end this without specially thanking you for the affectionate object of your yesterday's walk which I at once felt was principally intended to let me more fully understand the happy ending, for the present at least, of your disagreement with your mother.

Farewell, beloved Clotilde, I only leave off to attend otherwise to you by reading again the sad documents which I will give back to you, along with your mother's last letter, the next time you come, which I expect will be to-morrow as usual, unless you let me know to the contrary. This visit, while making up for the double disappointment of yesterday, will give me the certainty of your recent medical treatment not being disturbed by your getting back too soon to work at *Wilhelmine*. If, however, you cannot go out, will you allow me to come up to your work-room?

Your philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 78. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday afternoon, 25 October, 1845 (1 o'clock)

I will risk, Clotilde, being accused of too much anxiety about you, and send Sophie to bring me news of your dear health, about which I was made a little uneasy yesterday by the steady acceleration of your pulse, the heat of your hand, and your depression, not only physical but mental. Although you have to restrict medical visits as far as possible, do not hesitate, I beg you, if these symptoms continue, to seek advice of the doctor who lives in your house. But, first of all, I hope you will not go back too soon to *Wilhelmine*.

It is on occasions like this that I feel so painfully the great unsatisfactoriness of our regulation interviews, especially as they take place in such darkness that I am obliged to leave almost without having seen you, unless, so to say, at the moment of saying good-bye. My happiness being thus reduced to merely hearing you speak, I am even obliged to avoid showing my deep anxiety about you, as this would contrast too strongly with the strange sense of security which I feel surrounds you in regard to a state of health which, it must be known, has been severely shaken by so much suffering and sorrow. How different such evenings are from the time we had together last Wednesday, the delight of which I was still enjoying the next day, for in truly pure emotions the after taste is not less precious than the taste itself. The essential difference in these two ways of meeting came strongly home to me the next morning during the loving prayer with which,

ever since St. Clotilde's Day, I begin each morning. Kneeling before your altar, on which I now place the *heart's keepsake*, make it consist simply in an orderly repetition of such short passages from your letters as are fittest to characterise the progress and the direction of our holy affection. While this rapid commemoration of the principal phases of our friendship always rings out the same ardour, yet it is mixed with bitter regret, or with delightful hope, in regard to our relations with one another, according to the nature of each last interview. Nevertheless, however unsatisfactory be my evening visits, pray believe, beloved, that until better times I shall always prize them dearly, if only that I can then tenderly press your dear hand and hear your sweet voice.

The need of escaping from the painful feelings left by the perusal of the sad documents has just led me naturally to read again, for the fourth time, the touching story of your *Lucie*, which I had not read since early in July. You alone could really understand the novelty of the sweet emotions which the reading cannot fail to arouse in me, now that I know how far the painful reality of your case resembles that which you have put so pathetically into fiction. How much better I have been able to admire the noble resolution of your great soul, instead of *spreading the trouble that it feels*, to bring out from the whole of its sufferings lofty guidance to others! I have also been better able to appreciate the generosity of a mind which, in spite of such unjust suffering, makes you look on society without any personal bitterness. What tears emotion has drawn from me at the priceless maxim in which, preserved from the insanity of modern ideas, you sum up the true destiny of woman! Oh! dearest Clotilde, believe in the faithful and respectful worship of your philosopher, who feels himself scarcely worthy of you.

AT^{te}. COMTE

I am vexed with myself for not having asked you on Wednesday for the letter which you wrote to me the day before, but did not send. If you have kept it, I hope you will not deprive me of it, though I am asking for it rather late, having been under the impression that it had been destroyed. You know what value I attach to the least item of our correspondence.

I am feeling much pleasure beforehand in being able to give your worthy father so pleasant an evening. But my enjoyment would

not be unmixed with anxiety if I did not escort him home. This extra satisfaction will only put my bedtime a little later, and, as it happens, I had resolved to stay at home to-morrow, being Sunday.

I should give you notice that in accordance with my recent promise to you I have already made a change in my Monday's work, by bringing two engagements into one, from noon to 3 o'clock; thus, by undertaking this rather heavy duty, the only mornings on which I shall be obliged to go out will be those of Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Letter 79. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday, 25 October, 1845

DEAR FRIEND

I am now, as always, touched by your care of me: the acts by which you show how true an interest you take in me always come happily to a life like mine.

I send you a sad and touching letter which I have just received. (You can return it to-morrow). I answered it before showing it at rue Pavée. I am offering my dear Léon one of my two rooms, and all the little attentions which will enable him to stay here at small cost. I hope that he will accept this sharing of rooms with me, and that there will be no objection made to it at home. Half-pay ought not to be incompatible with prudence and care. As you are not going out on Sundays, I feel strongly inclined to take that day henceforth for myself; in any case I shall begin to-morrow. Expect me about 1 o'clock, but, above all, never be uneasy if I do not turn up, all sorts of things might happen.

Notwithstanding my having taken a purgative, my head seems very full; perhaps I shall be like that till the end of the month. My quick pulse can be kept down with a few drops of tincture of bark. As one trouble depends on another, perhaps all will go away together, and on the whole I am suffering less. What you say is very true, but what can I do? It is not foresight that is wanting, and though this be rather a sad gain, I feel myself stronger since I have gained it. You are quite right, I am free from bitterness; but I shall never again be the woman that I was, and I should not advise anyone to fall into the error of being too good or too kind. Take a little of this for yourself by the way;

it could not be better applied. No, mankind taken as a whole is neither kind nor generous. OUR SPECIES MORE THAN ANY OTHER, REQUIRES DUTIES TO BRING OUT FEELINGS.* How many people are selfish outside the narrow circle of the family! But it would require a better head than I have at present to deal with a subject like this. Good-bye till to-morrow my dear philosopher; it is understood that, if convenient to you, Sunday will be for us as for true believers, a day of rest; my thanks and farewell.

Letter 80. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday, 28 October, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I hope that you are not displeased with me for having changed our Wednesdays to Sundays. On second thoughts I understand that, all the same, you would prefer the first of these days. After I have done three or four weeks' work we will, if you like, resume our former arrangement; meantime, if I happened to be in your neighbourhood about noon, I now know that I may go up and ask how you are, and it is pleasant to think that I can do so. I am trying to write again to-day: to-morrow I shall probably get on very well, and I shall be very glad if I can finish without any fresh interruption.

Count on my affection, whether in times of peace or of war, dear friend. It is only fair to pay you back in some way. As my mother said to me in the letter you read, relationship is a matter of chance, but friends are made by the heart.

I am obliged to drag *Wilhelmine* into some of the adventures which are the natural result of eccentricity. I try to keep her pure of heart while she is erratic in mind, because I am reserving her for a work of wisdom which she will accomplish under the new philosophic direction. The present will be the first part, which will be confined to the story of her mistakes. Why cannot the pen run as thought would have it? Accept this little greeting with your usual kindness, my dear philosopher. I should very much regret having to refuse you anything that I could possibly manage; and, as I have told you, I will return to Wednesdays if that suits you better than the day of rest.

In the meantime, believe me

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE DE V.

* The fourth of the Seven Maxims of Clotilde de Vaux.—*Ed.*

Letter 81. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday morning, 29 October, 1845 (11 o'clock)

The happiness that I feel in acceding to any wish of yours will always prevail over any motive I may have for preferring anything else. So, dearest friend, I at once accepted on Sunday your idea of changing the weekly day so dear to me. But as you yourself already express some hesitation in the matter, I will frankly point out, as you wish, my own views on the subject. Not only will your new arrangement become impossible three months hence, as I have explained to you, while the other can be permanent, but it will certainly be, on the whole, less favourable to the proper continuity of our meetings. For this private conversation, so precious to me, is evidently much more conveniently timed if it be exactly midway in the longer of the two intervals between our regulation interviews, than if placed at the end of the shorter one. Nevertheless, whatever my reasons for preferring Wednesdays usually, they will easily yield to your present preference for Sundays as long as this suits you, and even up to the end of January if necessary.

From the very first experience of this temporary arrangement my heart has felt its natural inconvenience. Yesterday morning I felt a kind of gloomy sinking when I thought of the long time it would be before I could press your dear hand again. Your charming greeting arrived this evening, and soon cleared off this oppression from my heart. But even before this welcome message, I had resolved to give myself the pleasure of writing to you to-day, without any other reason than the need to make up a little for the emptiness of this Wednesday. Already I have had to thank your affectionate note for one of those delightful sleepless nights of which you spoke so charmingly. The harmony of our souls is perhaps so far complete that you may, instead of fancying you see me initiating a solemn audience of white mice into Positivism, have dreamt of me declaring at your feet how much I love you, during the silent hours which I was consecrating to the delicious feelings inspired by the happiness of worshipping you. The bodily fatigue which results, during the day, from such a way of passing the night, happens this time to cause no inconvenience; for to-day I had planned no other occupation than an important philosophical letter for England, and this I can put off without any inconvenience, should I feel ill-disposed for it

ter I have duly satisfied the first wants of my heart. I therefore on giving myself up without any misgiving to the pleasure have in telling you of my boundless gratitude for the happy oral resurrection I owe to you, the importance of which is continually increasing in every way. But, alas, I can no longer find in this purpose expressions as happy as those which recently flowed spontaneously from my delightful night thoughts.

This time, my Clotilde, you have very wisely taken care of our dear health by not returning too soon to *Wilhelmine*. Therefore I have every reason to hope that the favourable condition which I found you on Monday will become permanent. The head disturbance caused by the unfortunate coincidence of mental trouble with an actual accident will not, I hope, leave any trace now that these two causes have sufficiently passed off.

I felt great satisfaction, and I may say, a little pride, in your excellent plan in regard to *Wilhelmine*. Although you are as yet hardly acquainted with the new philosophy, I am in no way surprised that your admirable womanly sagacity has already seen the specially high fitness of Positivism already to combine all the essential principles of healthy morality, which, so long oppressed by revolutionary metaphysics, is now more and more threatened by the dangerous support of an empty retrograde ideology. You have had sufficient personal experience to have seen how unjust, or even silly, are the common accusations of alleged dryness, which were at first levelled at such a philosophy by those who could only perceive, even imperfectly, a few side aspects of it by dint of painfully straining their minds, while those who have made themselves sufficiently familiar with its vast general field have always found it help the natural development of tender and simple feeling. But even before it became capable of due systematisation, several clear instances had shown its natural fitness to stand its ground successfully in this respect against the competition of the old doctrines, whether theological or metaphysical. Amongst other instances is that of the touching affection, too little known, of a truly philosophical geometrician for Mlle. de L'Espinasse, which was both purer and deeper than the too celebrated love of the most eloquent of our sophists for Mme. d'Houdetot.

I shall follow, then, with lively interest, the noble stories, which you will help usefully, in your way, to show the moral power of true philosophy. You yourself, Clotilde, will acknowledge how well you are prepared for an efficacious and regular

contribution to the *Revue Positive*, when this well-timed idea of Littré's can be carried out, as soon it will doubtless be. Our affectionate co-operation is perhaps destined finally to be as celebrated as that of Voltaire with his Emilie : if I have less wit than the one, you have certainly more real worth than the other to make up for it. In any case, I know my Clotilde sufficiently to be certain that her noble ideals will never make her, any more than they will me, lose sight of the most attractive features of human life : the happiness of loving and of being loved. My great desire will always be above everything to earn the title of

Her loving philosopher

At^e COMTE

Yesterday the Italian Opera gave 'I Puritani,' although 'Nebuchadnezzar' had the day before been announced. Perhaps, then, some fortunate accident may enable me to escape this new *masterpiece* next Saturday. In that case I shall count on you to occupy my other stall in case Félicie declines. I shall make no other arrangement for my two seats until I have seen the actual bills of that day.

Letter 82. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 30 October, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

One of the epithets which would most hurt my feelings, and one of those which I shall always deserve the least, is that of a pedant. I hope that I shall never talk of anything that I do not know, or feel, well ; and when I said that I should make a philosopher of my *Wilhelmine*, I did not mean a systematic philosopher, but simply a philosopher in heart, a woman who loves Humanity for herself, without the terrors of the boiling cauldron down below, as without expectation of having a bed of roses in the celestial ether. What I understand best in the 19th century is the universal tendency of people towards simple good sense. Seeing how the most humble minds can naturally and without exertion have the benefit of all the light of discovery, I am becoming every day more imbued with the idea that science only needs to take its place at the head of a society to enrich it throughout, and, believe me, I easily console myself for not having been initiated into the wonders of the square of the hypotenuse.

I will go back to Wednesdays for our meetings. I shall be with you early, bringing my needlework, but if you do not mind, I would rather that you did not escort me back; it is now so long since I took up the position of a lone woman that I would rather adhere to it.

Dear friend, do not go on taking delight in your sleepless nights. You often attribute to me a great deal more wit than I have: and when I expressed my regret for their persistence, I said that I was principally sorry for your days, which I should think must be very wearisome under such conditions. If I did not sleep I should take an opiate, in spite of its drawbacks. It is a little too long to have to live twenty-four hours a-day. See to this, my dear philosopher, as well as to the rest. I am far from being pleased with most of the compliments that women enjoy; and when you tell me that you deprived yourself of sleep in order to think of me, it is just as if you had given me a little scratch. I thank you for your arrangements for Saturday. I shall be free, as I am nearly always. I must give my legs a week's rest as a consequence of Sunday and Monday. At the least effort my pulse plays tricks with me; whether I like it or not I must guard against this.

Farewell, my dear and good friend; rely on my affection and my sympathy.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 83. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 31 *October*, 1845 (11 o'clock)

Notwithstanding that I shall see you this evening, I cannot, dear friend, resist the impulse to answer at once the charming letter I have just received. How deeply its expressions make me feel the happiness, the glory even, of this incomparable affection!

There was no need of your admirable explanations to make me quite sure that my Clotilde would never take up the true philosophy except in the only way that is really suitable to her sex. Positivism can be approached in two ways, by the head and by the heart; there is a third way, which is scarcely more suitable to me than to you: it is, so to say, by the arms. Speaking more methodically, the new philosophy answers alike to the three great aspects of human life, thought, feeling, and action; therefore it allows of three corresponding ways of looking at it. Your happy womanly

instinct naturally makes you choose that which is really the straightest as well as the easiest of approach, inasmuch as it is directly connected with the real centre of our existence, the life of affection. It is thus that I have always understood, without any need of explanation, the spontaneous initiation of *Wilhelmine* to newly-born Positivism. Though fortunately free from all scientific preparation and from all systematic form, this initiation through the heart is certainly neither less complete nor less efficacious. The new mental discipline may be defined as especially having power to satisfy better than any other the moral wants of Humanity, which can all be summed up in a single one, Love. This basis of all feeling could not be cultivated hitherto, except in a very roundabout and imperfect manner, because the theological system necessarily shed a stain of selfishness over every noble or tender thought. It is only we Positivists who can habitually love in full purity for the mere happiness of loving, without any personal stimulus either of fear or of hope. At the same time, whilst our attention is fully concentrated on the real life of the individual, the species will always look towards the steady improvement of our condition, and especially of our nature. This is what all hearts can now feel, and what they will understand more and more effectively in Positivism, without troubling themselves about a systematisation which, however indispensable, the mass of mankind must confidently look for to the chosen thinkers, and this you have thoroughly grasped. I especially hoped that *Wilhelmine* would be able to bring these points out well, and I am happy to see now that my wish will soon be realised, even beyond what I at first expected.

As to the kind and degree of theoretical education which will finally suit your sex, that is a question which need not be decided at present and is even premature between us two.

It will be sufficient if I remind you that our great Molière (a Positivist in advance of his time) has very happily summed up the true general spirit of woman's education, by putting into the mouth of the man of good taste in his last masterpiece this admirable sentence :

'I would allow a woman to be given clear views on everything.'

This expression *clear views*, is really perfectly exact, and is very happily put. I hope, my dearest friend, that now you will no longer have any fear of being charged, even in thought, with

the least pedantry. You are well aware of my own natural aversion for everything allied to the blue-stocking. As to the square of the hypotenuse, please understand that it is not without its merits, provided that it be used in moderation, which, I must own, has hitherto been rather rare.

Your kind consent to resume our Wednesdays touches me infinitely, for I quite understand your motive, and I accept with pleasure the little sacrifice you make in this matter. I shall look upon your coming as early on Wednesday as you say ; and you will allow me, I hope, to kiss respectfully the graceful needlework which promises a long visit. I will only say to-day that your kind decision will make me, this time, lose the hope which I have been nursing, of having a visit from you the day after to-morrow. However, I shall only be out that day when I go, about five o'clock, to Blainville's monthly dinner. If, then, you felt inclined, as it is not a workday with you, to favour me with a very pardonable exception, you know how happy and grateful I should be. For the last six months the only moments when I have felt my moral life to be truly developing have been those of the free outpourings of our souls : and these six months, my Clotilde, seem to me sometimes an age, and sometimes a day, according as my thoughts dwell on the depth of my affection or on the imperfection and limitation of its development.

Do not be anxious, my loving friend, about the sleeplessness so dear to me ; for, after all, I am none the worse for it. It was only in May, when my love for you first began, that I had entirely sleepless nights. If I can get three or four hours of sleep, even though they be not continuous, believe me, I need no opiates. I know too well their dangerous results by dulling thought and tending to shorten life, to have recourse to them otherwise than in case of urgent and temporary need. Indeed, I very much wish that my usual sleep would return to the soundness and length I had before my heart gave itself to you, and I hope I may soon obtain this without the slightest lukewarmness. So please believe that I do not wilfully indulge in sleeplessness : it is the sweet visions of you which make me endure it with resignation, and even welcome it. On the whole you may be sure, Clotilde, that the true interest you take in my health will always make me take care of it. I am glad also that you are at last taking a more prudent and regular care of the health which is still dearer to me. We have both so much to think of, to love, and even to perform : why

should we not try to live ? Farewell, noble and tender friend ; I embrace you as I worship you. Farewell till this evening, and perhaps to-morrow at the opera.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 84. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday morning, 2 November, 1845.

DEAR FRIEND

This will come to you in my stead to-day. As I cannot walk I am at work ; as to Wednesday, you may count on me. I am very glad to have pleased you by resuming this mid-week day. I also feel how sweet it is to be quite myself from time to time, and I feel that with you I can think aloud.

In this respect I am less spoiled than ever by those around me. There is always some ill will in the attitude of the principal will of the family towards me ; and this makes me shut myself up in my hopes and in whatever courage remains to me during the few hours that I live with them. In other respects they are again becoming very friendly towards you. you are the first person who will have been forgiven for having noticed me.

Dear Léon has written a very nice letter of thanks, and, fortunately for him, it was taken very well at home. I have promised him your goodwill, and I do hope you will think him worthy of it.

I was much touched by your kind letter of yesterday, and, by the way, I must ask forgiveness for a slight fault, which you might think ill-natured if it went on. You have asked me to number my letters, and I have not been able to begin to do so yet, for I hate figures : come, we have not lost anything yet but a lock of hair, so do not be angry if I forget to please you in this matter, and in the dating of letters.

We shall meet, dear philosopher, on Tuesday, under the green boughs ; I ought rather to say under the bare boughs, but everything that reminds me of cold is always difficult to idealise ; a warmer and better simile would be the Sunday dinner wished for every peasant by good King Henry, gay old fellow though he was.

Take care of your health, dear and good friend ; I am happy to know that you wish to sleep : and, if it were necessary

your rest at night, that you should only love me a quarter of hour a day, I should wish, with all my heart, that this might begin to-morrow.

My heart bids me hold out my hand to you.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 85. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday afternoon, 2 November, 1845 (4 o'clock)

You have taken, beloved one, the best means to soften the pain of your necessary absence, by sending me an excellent letter, which reached me just at the moment when I was beginning to expect you. The joy it gives me, as your letters always and the pleasure of answering it at once, will pass the time sweetly which I expected to have had with you to-day, although it cannot really make up for the delight of your presence, especially when I think of the sad reason of care for your health which deprives me of it unexpectedly. Are you quite sure, dearest friend, that you have not begun your work again too soon? Would it not be wiser, since your legs have refused to work, to satisfy yourself with a quieter occupation, of some reading bearing suitably on your work? This sort of muscular failure seems to me, with little doubt, the symptom of some internal weakness which complicates much brain work, although it may temptingly urge you to it. But, above all, Clotilde, no more opiates or bark in any form, except in extreme urgency. It seems to me quite time for you to discontinue any treatment of that kind. I was so confident Monday that you were back at last to steady good health!

Before having to-day's explanation, I had already perceived that the recent pacification in your family relations did not fully put an end to the suspicious attitude all around you, always respecting your excellent father, who, to remain ever worthy of you, has never needed but to remain unchanged. The remark—saying which you recently quoted from your mother's last letter ought, one might have thought, to have made her see the general tendency of her conduct towards you. But, as you have well seen, it is between us two that the truth of this saying should be realised, it being as applicable for a long time past to me as to

In one of your most charming letters, you had already taken for our principal motto : ' Let us walk leaning upon one another.' I feel more and more for myself, and I venture to add for you, that this is indeed the best guarantee of true happiness. Lose not courage, my dear Clotilde ; since we are worthy of one another, our holy steadiness of purpose will bring us, soon perhaps, all the happiness possible in our respective situations without hurting proprieties or even any reasonable scruples. We must wait until time has, as you happily put it, *guided and moulded us*, while the certainty of having inspired me with the most devoted and changeless love will continue, I hope, to strengthen your patient endurance against the groundless ill-will which is your daily lot. If, as you think possible, I am really getting back into the good graces of your family, my silent influence may, perhaps, gradually have some effect on the meagreness of their affection for you.

As to your young brother, I thank you for having promised my good opinion, and, you might have added, my affection. I hope his career in the army will bring him near enough to us for me to be able often to show him both these feelings. In my eyes, your family will always be divided into two sets, one appreciating you as it should, and the other not behaving to you with full justice in every respect. Now, the former set seems to me to be composed of your good father and, I think, of your dear Léon, and for this reason especially he will always be able to count on my support. You must not, however, think that such opinions only come from my ardent and deep love. I can assure you that they come still more from the certain inferences which a true appreciation of your eminent nature is able by itself to draw, in regard to the moral standard and the real mental capacity of those who have had no want of opportunity of appreciating you.

The tender satisfaction which my letter of Friday afforded to you confirms my growing hope that I shall see the establishment between us of a full and active philosophical sympathy, both in opinions and in feelings. In this I already foresee an excellent application to the public good, showing how Humanity will benefit by the harmony of the sexes, from a point of view which has not yet been sufficiently dwelt on. Sound philosophy will never be able to replace religion entirely until it can, in the same way, make its deep impression on the heart, but other-

wise than through mawkish and barren metaphysical forms. You know what attention I have paid to this fundamental condition of success in the conception and execution of my second great work. Now, my adorable Clotilde, this shows how much I have to learn from you, who will thus become my unseen fellow-worker even though you may not know it and, I might say, never wish it. Before beginning this new work I wrote out, about three months ago, a general dedication to you, intended entirely for the private satisfaction of my craving to thank you even now. But in this respect I shall not be fully satisfied until I can pay you in the full light of day all the homage which you more and more deserve. For the benefit of high minds and noble souls, I shall put forward with sufficient emphasis the happy philosophical and social effect of this new type of mental and moral partnership, in which the capacities of each sex lend one another strength. Even you cannot yet appreciate all the strength given to such a partnership, because its preliminary condition will especially be the fullest degree of emancipation which human reason has yet attained. Sooner or later I shall find an opportunity of putting forward this view in a manner equally worthy of both of us.

I am afraid that Félicie did not care very much for last night's opera, not only because of Corelli unfortunately having to replace Mario unexpectedly, but especially from her touching motherly solicitude, although it was, perhaps, a little exaggerated. Each member of the family having now occupied my guest's stall, I intend using it from Saturday next for its proper object, and I hope you will not hesitate to use it more than the rest of the family. Farewell, my peerless friend, until the day after to-morrow's dinner, and still more till our dear Wednesday, which has become more sacred than ever in consequence of the affectionate way in which you appreciate its influence on both of us.

Your philosopher for life,

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 86. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 6 November, 1845 (3 o'clock)

DEAR AND KIND FRIEND

Pardon the inconsiderateness of the kiss which ended our heartfelt interview of yesterday. Not only ought I to have taken care

as a general rule not to have risked displeasing you in this way, but I should have especially remembered that my digestion was then a little out of order, the consequence of which was, that my breath, usually quite sweet, was, for a time, unworthy to mingle itself with yours. But I hope that the kindness of your affectionate feeling for me will have already forgiven the indiscretion of my ardour.

This unusual internal derangement continued yesterday to such an extent that I had to abstain from any food, and consequently I found myself this morning unfit to go to give my lesson ; but this starvation diet has fortunately been successful . I had a fair night, and I feel well enough now not to miss the opera to-night.

While I am asking your forgiveness I must ask it with more reason in regard to my questions, sometimes blundering perhaps, though never indiscreet nor, I hope, troublesome, on the kind of attention which the health of one so dear to me requires. From the explanations you gave yesterday, I begin to understand that my advice and my anxiety have not always been based, in this respect, on a sufficient knowledge either of your constitution or, which is still more important, on your previous conditions of health. Now that I am certain of your being sincerely reconciled with life, be sure, my Clotilde, that, notwithstanding the anxiety I shall always have about your health, I shall now place more confidence in the wisdom you have acquired from experience in this matter.

Though I have not yet said much about your humble confession of neglect in numbering your letters, I hope you will not think me such a zealous fanatic of preciseness as to have any ill-feeling on the point. I ought rather to ask your forgiveness for taking, on my side, these minute precautions, due entirely to the great value I place on our correspondence ; for I am far from being as careful about my other letters.

I am deeply touched by the tender expression of self-denial which ends your charming letter of Sunday, but if I had to choose between my love and my sleep, I should not hesitate. Why should I take care of my life, if, by so doing, I gave up the principal interest it has for me ? Fortunately I shall never have to face this alternative, for I am beginning to sleep a little better, and certainly without loving you any less.

Farewell, my adorable Clotilde, I hope you will accept these incoherent explanations, if only that they may be an innocent pretext for friendly chats. Our position towards one another is still in other respects so little satisfactory, that I may well be forgiven for taking every opportunity which promises me such sweet compensations. Till to-morrow evening then, for the happiness of pressing your dear hand, and especially till Saturday's pleasant evening, unless the King of Assyria should be so tiresome as to appear. Rely ever, my Clotilde, on the deep and respectful love of your philosopher,

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 87. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 7 November, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I think it was I who gave the kiss yesterday, all in good friendship. If it was not so, I heartily grant you absolution. I am sorry that it should be a sacrifice to you not to go further than this. The rather delicate position in which I find myself suddenly placed in regard to you has often appeared to increase my sorrow, for I pass on to you almost what I have suffered myself. But, as a philosopher and a man of feeling, you will be able to understand me: at least it is a consolation to think so.

I came back yesterday, my heart heavy with all this gossip: I had found my mother very sad, and to-day she seems still more so; alas! everyone has a struggle in life, and everyone has to suffer; so we have to forgive much, especially to mothers.

You, my dear friend, by whose side I feel so well, need never be afraid of wearying me by your anxiety about me. I accept it from the bottom of my heart with sincere gratitude, and it can only attach me to you more and more.

I scribble these lines to you just as I am getting up. I am a little stronger than I have been lately, though I am always subject to palpitations. * Take good care of your stomach, that very important organ in our poor arrangements. I owe a great deal to mine, and that makes me feel all the more how much respect each should have for his own.

Till this evening, good-bye, my dear friend, and also till to-morrow if I am free from asthma and have a whole head.

Yours with all my heart

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 88. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday morning, 8 November, 1845 (6 o'clock)

When I came home last night after pressing your dear hand, I was going, my sweet friend, to answer your pleasant letter of the morning at once, for I had read it too late to be able to thank you for your gracious forgiveness. But reason interfered, and sent me to bed only fuller than usual of charming thoughts of you. This prudence has been repaid by a good night, and, by putting off for a little my tender morning prayer, I have got up quite fit to fulfil in good time this sweet duty which yesterday's pleasant evening does not seem to have made superfluous; our feelings towards one another can thus have freer and clearer play than by even the most cordial interview.

In each of your letters I admire more and more the sweet delicacy of your heart and the exquisite grace of your mind. I am deeply touched by the amiable simplicity which, notwithstanding so many just grievances, makes your filial tenderness prevail over any other feelings that may be provoked. You are quite right, my dear friend, we must learn to make special excuses for mothers; yesterday your mother seemed to be in serious grief, for what reason I do not know. Your forgiving attitude towards her will never be met by aught but encouragement from me, if indeed you required any other motive to good feeling than the satisfaction it gives to yourself.

As you allow me, Clotilde, to press upon you the care which I think your health requires, allow me at once to recommend a very moderate amount of work, supposing you cannot make up your mind to stop it entirely for a time. No one can feel more than I do the important claims of your excellent story, to say nothing of the happy diversion it gives you from your usual sorrows and troubles. I also see that it will soon have a great effect in giving you that rightful personal freedom which is more and more to be desired. But just now I am uneasy about the restlessness of your brain, associated as it is with muscular prostration. Your hot hands and your obstinately quick pulse seem to me to point out very clearly the necessity of rest, that of the mind especially. I beg you then to act up to the wise resolve you made yesterday evening; to go and have a serious talk with your doctor, and I have no doubt that he will, in the first place, prescribe, for a time at least, the restriction of all brain work to the quiet exercise of

reading only. The noble object, private and public, of your work, should be a sufficient reason for husbanding better that physical strength which, if unwisely spent at present, may put off for a long time the realisation of your reasonable hopes.

The kind letter, which I am now answering, touches with admirable delicacy the most painful of my own anxieties. After the decisive crisis in our relations last September, I promised to wait without murmuring for the possible change which you allowed me to hope in the state of your feelings towards me. Since your allusion to this seems to excuse my breaking the silence which I have kept on this subject, I will only thank you for having understood that I can suffer and resist both as a man of feeling and as a philosopher, abstaining from any indiscreet solicitation. The strict continence I have had to keep since my heart has been given to you is indeed too natural for me now to claim any merit for it. But perhaps there may be some in my ability to wait with affectionate resignation for that sacred pledge and incomparable bond, the free gift of which alone gives it full value. Your touching allusion makes me hope that the firmness of my loyalty in keeping to the respectful attitude assumed by my heart will never lead you to think that I attach any less value to the free concessions which are indispensable to the fulness and the completeness of the inexpressible happiness given me by our holy affection for one another. I am thus able confidently to renew my sincere promise to leave to you always the full control of our personal relations to one another, seeking only in the esteem of your heart the reward of the sacrifices I make in the satisfaction of my feelings, until a sweet and growing change in yours allows you to put an end to these sacrifices. Above all, believe that, however painful they may be to my heart, they do not prevent me from feeling deeply the full value of the noble affection you have already granted to

Your dear philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 89. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday morning, 8 November, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

I feel too tired to be able to enjoy the opera this evening. If you would like to give Félicie the benefit of my seat, it will

clear you for a long time of any social debt to her. I think that two days' rest will be sufficient to set me up again thoroughly, and I am going to take it. What I want along with my pen is only some out-door exercise, and I am always dragged into household drudgery, in the morning on my own account, in the evening for the family; all this is rather difficult to manage together. *Wilhelmine* once out of hand, I shall arrange to get my allowance, and to live at last according to my needs. As long as I am not on the staff, not much will be thought of my work, so it is most important for me to make my start as soon as possible. How I thank you from the bottom of my heart for having helped me on as you have done. Thanks to you, I am able to have a fire and to have the warm clothes I require, and these are two very important needs for me; the rest is free to each one of the family, and has never failed me. Now do not say anything more about this; words are only like hitting the air, we must work and wait. If I were stronger all these trifles would run off me like water off a duck's back: I can only hope that steady resolve will give me, in time, the same insensibility.

My mother is very anxious about me, and this saddens me, but it is so certain that I could not fulfil her changing hopes that I do not try to do so at all.

Farewell till Monday, dear and kind friend; perhaps I may be free also on Saturday. I am expecting a great deal from the rest I am taking. And do you also try to keep well, and count on my truest affection.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

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Letter 60. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 6 November, 1845 (8 o'clock)

When I sent yesterday to let Felicie know that there would be no opera last night, I had news, my heavenly friend, about your dear health, and more disagreeable news than by the affectionate letter which you wrote to me just before receiving that which I wrote you in the morning; that is why Sophie has been instructed, after having carefully enquired about your state of health, to save you, as much as possible this morning from all bodily fatigue. So have no hesitation in keeping her for this purpose as long as you like. I beg you, this time, not to resist as much

as you did before. Should not everything be in common between us even now? Besides, you know that even just for a child, I have done without my servant more frequently, and for a longer time, than your present need would require, and without feeling seriously inconvenienced. Why should I then be less disposed to do you a service, or why should you hesitate about accepting it?

With all my anxiety, I am glad to know that you have begun to pay serious attention to your health, and that you have at last decided to take a rest. I hope that you have begun to take it in good time, and that you will have the prudence to keep on with it as long as is necessary. Your view of the kind of life suited to your health seems to me very judicious. It makes me less uneasy about the future, provided that you will persevere firmly in conforming your way of living to it. Intellectual work, some open air exercise every day, with no other physical exertion: that is the life that will suit you when once the present crisis is over. You might, it seems to me, henceforth avoid the purely personal part of your household work. If we lived a little nearer, Sophie might easily go every morning to save you this trouble, for she really has very little to do in my place, as this kind woman tells me she has herself pointed out to you. However, by an inexpensive arrangement with your porter's wife, this could be easily managed, as soon as you like. As to the tiring work at your home, it seems to me that it would be sufficient for you to put forward properly to your family its risk to your health for you to be freed from it, especially if the family doctor were to speak out on the subject.

While I urge the immediate expediency of doing this, I do not lose sight of the wisdom, I might say the urgent need, of the judicious plan of life which you trace out, and it seems to me as desirable as it is possible that this should be put in force soon. Indeed it is necessary that you should at last be entirely yourself, as much on account of your health as of your happiness. Your family could not reasonably make any objection to so rightful a change, when it has seen you suffer so many misfortunes not less strange than undeserved. I quite understand the great help you will get from your present work by enabling you to take this decisive step; from this point of view it is very important for you to finish it as soon as the care of your health will allow. But allow me, noble and tender Clotilde, to make a slight improvement in your wise plan, by making it independent of this condition,

win my uncle over to my side as soon as I shall have a clear title to do so. Before this I can neither have recourse to him nor tell my father his kindnesses, because my mother imposed secrecy upon me.

As for accepting the immense services that you wish to render me, my dear philosopher, this is in my eyes a thing still more impossible. If I had the happiness to return the love with which I have inspired you, I could at the most consent to your devoting to me a part of your time and of your tastes. I have too few claims to your devotion to put it to the proof in any other manner than I have done up to the present time. You may look upon yourself as sufficiently invested with the part of my protector by the noble kindnesses you have shown me ; and I look upon myself, for my own part, as so much surrounded by your honourable and holy protection that I shall regard you with the simplicity and confidence of a child. I wish only, at the same time, to render to my own people the justice that is their due. It is six years since they began to accustom themselves to my misfortune, and to all the inconveniences of my ill-health. Our doctor, like the kindly-disposed man he is, has given all the injunctions necessary for my treatment. They have been on the point of dismissing him three or four times for his frankness : but I feel the effects of it nevertheless, and truly they take as much care of me as possible, but it requires only a very little thing to tire me very much.

In my own place I do my little duties as much for pleasure as through habit, and when the end of the day comes I have always used up a great deal too much strength in proportion to what I have left.

I am going to employ my porter's wife regularly, and reserve myself for my pen and a little walking. If then you can really, and without giving yourself any additional trouble, give me your help without letting it be known, I promise to ask for anything I require to get over the difficulty. How many women, with no less claim than myself, have not the means that I have, my dear friend ! And above all, how many there are who must be in need of a real support or a generous friend such as I have found ! You gain in return the pleasant thought that you have revived a fainting soul, and poured balm into a wounded heart ! Would that I could in return do you the good that you have done me !

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We will talk over my plans : write to me between now and Wednesday. I am going to ask from you the means of supplying my *unexpected* needs. Forgetfulness has a good deal to do with this sort of negligence. Although I have had this year all that I am supposed to want, there have been some expensive necessities which were not taken into account. They even dispute my quality of orderliness, which is one of my strong points. When I have worn a dress two years, they are surprised at my mending it. I only tell you this for the sake of vindicating myself in your eyes, my dear philosopher. I shall be, besides, very fine in Léon's dress this winter ; but I have had to get everything except what is on the outside. If you can lend me 100 francs more, to pay for all this, you will be above the level of Providence for me.

Good-bye, my dear friend, until to-morrow evening. I have treated my heart with outward applications of digitalis ; this has diminished the palpitation ; but I have no more strength in my legs than a shadow. I shall go and see the doctor if this does not improve ; he says, however, that drugs can do but very little for me, and I think he is right.

Yours with all my heart

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

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Letter 92. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday morning, 10 November, 1845 (10 o'clock)

A second reading of the precious letter I have just received has made me feel the need of replying to it at once, and I hope to have enough time before I go to my work, leaving for development at our pleasant meeting the day after to-morrow what I can only slightly refer to this morning.

I must first thank you again for the touching confidence which your holy affection has granted me. This already constitutes the principal reward of my love, even in the case of its never attaining the priceless reciprocity for which I can never cease ardently to long. While always respecting the noble delicacy which, in the present state of your heart, forbids your acceptance of my spontaneous devotion to its fullest extent, I rejoice to see you at least consenting to-day with cordial frankness to the additional assistance that I proposed to you as the only one for your

immediate acceptance. You may then rely upon the pleasure I shall have in handing to you on Wednesday that for which you have been so good as to ask me ; my temporary difficulties will never, and do not even now, deprive me of this friendly co-operation.

As to your personal plans, they demand much preliminary consideration. That of joining your father requires especially to be carefully weighed : it is the best immediate solution, always presupposing the indispensable conditions which you so wisely point out to me ; but it has the serious drawback of unduly compromising the future. I very much approve your proposal of establishing direct relations with your worthy uncle, and I agree that your present work will furnish you the best occasion for effecting this. Nevertheless, I cannot help regretting that you have so far promised your mother to hide this honourable protection from your father ; as you are pledged to silence you must doubtless keep it ; but I fear that it has been prescribed to you with the purpose, although perhaps unconsciously, of subjecting you more completely to maternal despotism.

I am much pleased to hear that you are at last willing to devote serious and continued care to your precious health. Your doctor has reinstated himself in my opinion, first by his courageous frankness with your parents as regards yourself, and then by his conscientious declaration of the radical powerlessness of pharmacy in your case ; give your attention, then, specially to your way of life, under all its numerous aspects ; here lies your great resource, and one that I venture to guarantee will be found sufficient in itself, if it is properly persevered in. One of the most important prescriptions to be at once put in execution consists in handing over your daily duties to your porter's wife ; I am delighted to find that you have so soon accepted my suggestions on this head. When your family become aware of this new arrangement, they will feel, I have no doubt, as an indispensable part of such a precaution, the evident necessity of sparing you from bodily exertions during the hours you spend with them.

Your affectionate acknowledgment, my dear and noble friend, of the fortunate efficacy of my attachment in already stimulating your soul to renewed activity, involves me in a deep debt of gratitude to you. If your holy friendship can some day be at last transformed into a real love, what happiness will ever have been equal to mine ! Resting on such a preliminary foundation, this

ineffable happiness would be assured a continuance equal to its energy.

Farewell, my incomparable Clotilde ; to-night I shall have the satisfaction of tenderly clasping your hand, and on Wednesday the special happiness of freely talking over all your plans.

My only and eternal love is yours.

Ate COMTE

Letter 93. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday morning, 11 November, 1845

How happy I shall be, my honoured friend, when I am able to give you pleasure in my turn ! If I ever obtain my independence, you may count upon the best place in my chimney-corner. Meanwhile, count upon that which you now occupy in my heart.

The service that you have again rendered me sets me up once more. I have paid some little debts and taken my precautions for the winter ; I have nothing more to do but coddle myself while preparing the advent of *Wilhelmine*. Every day I feel a greater inclination for the profession ; and if I can only once recover my strength from all the enemies that dispute it with me, I feel that I shall attain my end. I know very well that later on, the correctness of my views, and the advantage of persevering in them, will be appreciated, and it is only now my want of physical strength which is the difficulty.

I hope that the digitalis will put me right by Thursday or Friday. I feel already much less oppression, and the palpitation is much diminished. To-morrow I shall come and see you by boat ; between now and then I am going to read and look after my clothes.

Farewell, my true philosopher, may your lot also improve in the proportion you deserve ! I fear that you find your equals about you but rarely, and that you must never count upon anything but your own merit.

Accept with my tender greeting the unending assurance of my attachment.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 94. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 11 *November*, 1845 (2 o'clock)

I fear, my beloved, that I replied too soon to your excellent letter of Sunday, and that it perhaps required more deliberation. Although I have nothing to change in my reply, I did not there insist enough upon an important explanation, which ought not to remain simply a verbal one.

Over-sensitive delicacy has made you set aside, as if it were concerned only with the present, the proposition which I brought forward again only as a last resource, and as such it would always remain open between us. I advised you besides, at the same time, to have recourse to your family as much as you could rightly do, and only to fall back upon our holy friendship for supplementary means in any case of insufficiency or emergency. Under this aspect I hope that you have already made up your mind to ask me freely for whatever may be necessary for you ; you know how happy I shall always be to provide it. Be sure, too, that I shall never be put to any real inconvenience by this, even should my present difficulties be prolonged to a much greater extent than is likely.

But as regards the extreme case to which my principal offer relates, I must, if you will allow me, point out the want of foundation for the dislike you have shown it, a dislike arising out of insufficient, though honourable, considerations, which are inspired by the present state of your feelings. However highly I shall always value the hope of at last finding in you feelings similar to my own, simple friendship would by itself urge me to make this offer, and should also decide your acceptance of it, supposing that the necessary safeguarding of your complete independence or of your due dignity should ever determine you to renounce any assistance from your family.

Associations of this kind have always, no doubt, been very rarely formed, but several undeniable examples of them have occurred, either between two men, or between two people of different sex. Are we not both of us highly enough organised to repeat the realisation of these noble exceptions, the honour of human nature ? At bottom they consist in extending to friendship the function already universally attributed to fraternity and paternity. Now, is this not an opportunity of applying the memorable maxim lately formulated by your mother ? Of course, I shall never cease to see in you my only real wife, and to

keep towards you, whatever happens, as much faithfulness, both moral and physical, as if our union had been real and complete, even if as I have, alas, only too much reason to fear, I should never obtain anything more from you than simple friendship.

Why do you speak of the necessity for paying back? Do you forget the pleasure of giving, and even that of accepting? Must not positive morality surpass theological and metaphysical morality, by leading Humanity to an active practice of pure disinterestedness? Am I not fully rewarded beforehand for such efforts by the sweet persuasion of having been already enabled, according to your touching expressions of the day before yesterday, to *revive a fainting soul, and pour balm into a wounded heart*? As to what I gain from our holy connection, should I fail to appreciate the precious change it has wrought in the whole of my moral being? It is to you that I owe the full development of the tender affections, and even of the most generous sentiments. Thanks to you, I feel myself becoming every day better and happier; even as regards those things which concern my philosophical action upon Humanity, the second half of my noble career will thus surpass the first. If it is true, as we both admit, that the great aim of human life consists in the continuous improvement of our nature, both individual and collective, could we fail to appreciate the work of such benefits, when they so directly concern this noble purpose? Such an important result would certainly be worth attaining, even at the expense of a few extra hours of daily work, and this would put me really to no greater inconvenience than perhaps delaying the publication of an important work for one or two years, even supposing that the energy produced so delightfully by such a frame of mind did not compensate me for this decrease of leisure in the carrying out of my principal composition. How many such sacrifices are made by ignoble natures for the sake of their mere health or their coarse pleasures! Why should not superior men buy at the same price the noblest moral improvements?

Your refusal then, would not have any reasonable foundation as far as I am concerned. As to your own scruples, I should allow their reasonableness if I were granted only a second place in your affection; but you look upon me really as your best and only friend, with the exception of the members of your family, and, so far as the state of your heart goes, you no longer prefer anyone to me; there should, then, exist no feeling of delicacy to

prevent your accepting my entire protection, even though your feelings should never correspond fully to mine.

In any case, my Clotilde, my offer is so entirely independent of my passion, that I have always guarded against any exaggerated temporary impulse, or the exclusive consideration of my own personal feelings. Whilst aiming at my own moral improvement I must always be filled with no less solicitude on behalf of yours. So I have never wished either to interfere with the fair claims of your family upon you, or even to lessen your own individual efforts. My tutelary intervention, as I looked upon it, was always intended to take the place of the twofold natural protection which has failed you, by discharging on your behalf, with much less power certainly, but with a great deal more justice and discernment, the function that the devout attribute to their Providence.

I hope, my noble and tender friend, that by these explanations I shall remove all distrust from your mind, and gradually do away with your delicate scruples in regard to a step which you should reasonably look on as insuring your safety and preventing any despair. I feel that it is only in case of a closer union that I should be authorised to advise you openly to choose this course in preference to any other that is really practicable. To-morrow we will talk of your various plans for the immediate present and future. I may already tell you that my own reflections have led me to set aside as too dangerous the scheme of your joining your worthy father.

Yours ever

A^{te} COMTE

When she brings you this additional letter, Sophie is charged to obtain special information about your precious health.

Letter 95. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday evening, 11 November, 1845

I wish I could reply at length to all you say to me, my dear friend. But I am too much indisposed, and do not wish to detain Sophie too long. I will then only thank you for your unceasing kindness. No, I cannot accept your offers unless I become your wife: my mind is irrevocably determined as to this. To be able to undertake an engagement as important as that of a new union I must fully possess my mental energy and my reason. What I

have suffered in the course of my life does not resemble any ordinary misfortune. I suffer more perhaps through myself than through circumstances ; and I must be sure that I could fulfil the new duties that I should take upon myself, to my own satisfaction.

I do not believe that there lives a better and nobler man than you ; but although it is necessary to acquire this belief in the man one chooses, it is not the only thing, and this is true on the other side too. I might be wanting in the most important qualities for making such a man as you are happy, and then !

In the condition of mental suffering and struggle in which I still remain, I cannot depend upon myself. In spite of all the good I know in myself, should I do well to risk your future as well as my own ?

We shall meet to-morrow, my dear friend, although I am very poorly. I have been spitting blood part of to-day, and my heart is painful, although quieter. Do not be anxious about me ; I will adopt all the best means for setting myself afloat again. May my melancholy sincerity not sadden you, it certainly springs from the part afflicted.

A tender embrace

CLOTILDE

Letter 96. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday evening, 12 November, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

I have just given myself a pleasure that I have been wishing for a long time, namely that of telling my family of a part of your goodness towards me. Without going into an explanation of how I did it, I will only assure you that it was on a fitting occasion, and that they could not but consider me honoured by it. This childish outburst from my heart has done me good, and I do not think that you will blame me for it. It is not right to put one's friends' faces under cover. If good is less contagious than evil, there is all the more reason to assist its growth : compensation is especially necessary in its case.

My heart has failed me again this evening ; though the air did revive me a little, and I will try to go out to-morrow. How I particularly thank you for all you do to spoil me ! I appreciate it more than I can tell.

We shall meet on Friday evening, my dear philosopher. I hope that they will still be in an amiable humour, and that you will profit by it. This is nothing but a Wednesday good night; I send it you with tenderness.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 97. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday morning, 13 November, 1845 (7 o'clock)

I am sending Sophie this morning, my beloved, to bring news of the precious health about which I have been much alarmed by yesterday's attack. Alas! I shall not cease for a long time to see you in the painful attitude in which you rested upon my little sofa. In spite of your wishes, I ought indeed to have accompanied you as far as the conveyance.

You feel, I hope, my Clotilde, how much I appreciate your touching thanks for my very small services. I specially rejoice that you have been able to grant me in general matters the noble right of securing you a satisfactory position, and contributing at the same time to the improvement of your mind. Without this power in reserve, my friendly protection could be nothing but an honourable sinecure. You have irrevocably established this pleasant function for me, by making it henceforward independent of your inability to return my affection, as well as of the kind fate which places my heart at your disposal. Our sacred bond is then in being, and this, I can assure you, was in my eyes the main point.

In the midst of these delightful emotions, however, I feel it my duty frankly to acknowledge that yesterday's meeting* made me almost certain that your heart would never attain to more than merely friendly feelings towards me. So sad a conviction would very much impair the ineffable happiness of which I have dreamt, but would not entirely prevent its partial fulfilment. Let me hope that even in this case our union would not seem quite impossible to you, if you should find in me all the other qualities necessary for your happiness, as I believe to have found in you all those which would assure mine. It is true that love has always seemed to me to be a preliminary still more necessary in your sex than mine. But

* Image of 12 November, 1845.—*Ed.*

your nature is so superior that it deserves to be made an exception to this general rule. I should not hesitate then to content myself with the pure friendship which you have already given me, and with the assurance only that with regard to anything more your heart would at least remain completely free. By thus pledging my life to you, I should not be afraid that I was committing any real imprudence. It would not be, fortunately, the first example of complete domestic happiness in the absence of perfect reciprocity of affection, when there is sufficient sympathy on the principal points. But would such a prospect be enough to overcome your conscientious objections, and to bring about a well considered assent on your part?

Adieu, dear wife of my heart, accept the chaste embraces of
Your philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Sophie is to consult with you about a servant who has been recommended to her for your father. As Sophie only knows this woman indirectly, you will let her know, after she has told you what she can, what answer she is to give to the proposal.

Letter 98. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 13 November, 1845 (3 o'clock)

Several things have obliged me to defer the pleasure of reading the note Sophie brought me this morning. I am very much touched by the delicate affection which inspired you to take your relations partly into your confidence as to my little friendly services. But, as Sophie has brought me an excellent account of your health to-day, I may make bold to scold you a little for this confidence, which is more noble than prudent, although I am ignorant of the form it took and its real extent, and cannot therefore finally judge it. If, on the one hand, I see in it the advantage of calling out generous emulation which would be to your profit, I fear on the other lest it should lead to a tendency to easy indifference. This piece of information may probably awaken or stimulate, towards me, the underlying spirit of distrust and suspicion, and even perhaps suggest the idea in some fit of ill-humour of repulsing me by an unfeeling repayment, which however I have quite made up my mind never to accept or to endure.

All considered, I cannot help regretting, my tender Clotilde, that you should have betrayed this secret of friendship, although in so noble a spirit, without having first consulted me. Your telling them lessens somewhat, in my eyes, the merit of my friendly assistance ; this sweet secret should never have left our hearts. Would it not seem at first sight that your careful prudence intended giving me fresh assurance for repayment, by creating a kind of collective gratitude in your family, with which, to tell the truth, I feel myself rather annoyed than touched ? Although I know you did it from much less commonplace and more kindly motives, I cannot help considering this confidence as ill-timed and even imprudent ; to begin with, it will, in time, make them imagine, in this matter, much more than the actual facts warrant. However, my Clotilde, you must not consider your friend's frank remonstrance as being decisive ; when you have better informed him, his conclusion will perhaps be very different.

As we are at present on expressions of our gratitude, I may tell you that I, on my side, have in store, though for a somewhat distant date, a pleasure which I shall greatly value, and that will not bring any inconvenience with it : I will in return pass it on for your friendly criticism. It is concerned with the deep sense of gratitude that for the last six months it has delighted me to owe to her who has so nobly revived my heart and raised in me all generous sentiments. I shall never be quite content until I can explain in a worthy manner to the public I am honoured in addressing, the priceless value of a well directed affection, of which the principal results will be indirectly felt in my great work for Humanity. Now I think I can suitably obtain this exalted gratification by openly dedicating to you, as I have already secretly done, the new great work which I began in my last vacation. Although it cannot be published for four years, I am certain that this unavoidable delay will not diminish, in your opinion, the value of this cordial testimony, and it will besides afford me the secondary advantage of naturally obviating the legitimate rivalry of my various friends or colleagues for such a distinction. You will agree, I hope, my beloved, that in this public expression of my private gratitude there will by that time be none of the dangers that your confidences to your family has made me fear for the present ; no one will have any idea or even any chance of misrepresenting it. By the time it is accomplished, I may confidently assure you that you will be so well

known and appreciated that your free acceptance of this homage will even increase the value of this holy friendship in the eyes of everyone.

Farewell, my adored Clotilde. The pure love that I feel for you has so penetrated me that I should like to spend my life writing to you, or reading your letters when I cannot see and speak to you. You will consent, I hope, that your own immortality should be firmly established by the help of that of

Your affectionate philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 99. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 13 November, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I am very sorry for having told my family, since this has displeased you. I can, however, answer for its having no undesirable result, and that I had no ulterior purpose in doing so, but only yielded to an impulse of affection that I was glad to have a chance of showing to those about me. It was about the rest that I require : I said that you had been kind enough to send Sophie to me for several days in succession, and that at last, yesterday, you had offered me your purse quite in a fatherly way, until I should have a supply of my own, and that you had let me have 100 francs so that I might take care of my health in several small ways while I am finishing *Wilhelmine*. In intimate and friendly intercourse it is quite simple to act in this way, and my information in no way changed the present disposition of affairs. What I can see most clearly in your regret, my dear friend, is a scrupulous modesty and delicacy, and this does not seem to me well founded. I find that, in my family's opinion, your goodness, propriety, and openness, are quite as they should be : I can see it in no other light.

As to my having wanted to give you a guarantee, I know you to be too much above such things to have thought of it. They, too, would only think of paying my debts to you if I died. You see, you are not in danger of present repayment.

I hope then that you will pardon me my rashness, dear friend, and I tenderly thank you for this in advance.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 100. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 16 November, 1845 (10 o'clock)

The depressing indisposition in which I left you on Friday made me yesterday pass a wretched day in regretting your sufferings and difficulties—you, whose misfortunes even are a matter of dispute. In spite of the evening's better news, my night felt the sad effects of this distressing agitation. Such fluctuations, only too frequent, in the state of your dear health make me resolved this morning to inform myself, through Sophie, whether the improvement continues. I hope, my dear Clotilde, that my heartfelt anxiety will never be troublesome to you.

The need of such attentions makes me specially regret the extreme imperfection of our existing relations, which forces me to an undue repression of my purest desires and most reasonable anxieties. When, my dear friend, will the time come when, in fulfilment of your delightful promise of Tuesday morning, I can '*count on the best place in your chimney-corner*,' and freely come to divert all your anxieties by a friendly talk or an interesting reading? I come to feel more and more that your just claim for personal freedom is no less desirable and urgent for you than it is for me. As it is, there is but one day in the week which offers true satisfaction to my feelings. Our two other weekly meetings, besides being so incomplete and so constrained, are at the mercy of very capricious natures which the slightest difference of opinion, and even the inevitable clashing arising from blind scientific presumption, may at any moment turn against us. Our connection has, it is true, fortunately become independent for the future of any relations between your brother and myself, yet the nature of these relations may greatly influence our regulation evening meetings, which, unsatisfactory though they be, I shall always highly prize so long as your own situation is not placed on a

more comfortable basis. Besides, I intend to-day, with heartfelt anxiety, to begin the deliberate examination which I promised of your brother's book. I cannot but fear, in spite of the wise precautions of kindly silence, or affectionate sincerity, that the consequence of the remarks I must unavoidably make in my judgment of the work may result in a chilling attitude, which would fatally mar my visits to your family.

After having better thought over what you recently confided to me of your family affairs, I am sorry to have been first led to express my own opinion in a case where I now see that I have for a moment, as it were, usurped the rights that I specially conferred upon you. Having freely trusted to you the supreme direction of our entire mutual relationship, I should have felt that this general attribute naturally carried with it the functions of being sole judge how and in what respects our sympathetic friendship should be suffered to appear—especially when at home with your family. I should then, whatever was my own opinion on the matter, have, as heretofore, respected your initiative, which is always founded, not only upon the constant purity of the motives which inspire you, but also upon your more accurate appreciation of what is proper in the existing state of affairs. Forgive me, my dear friend, for this sort of unintentional insubordination, which shall not be repeated. However, by skilfully assigning your health and work as constituting the chief cause for the assistance you acknowledged, you will, I hope, have helped to make the one better taken care of, and the other better respected. And now that this straightforward explanation has so far been well received, there will perhaps be an implied recognition that I need not henceforth hide so carefully from your people my deep concern for my only friend.

The attention paid to this incident has naturally led you to overlook replying to the second part of my letter of Thursday evening—and indeed there was less immediate need for reply. But you should specially bear in mind that through the crossing of our letters, my preceding letter (No. 97*) still remains unanswered, although its main purport had reference to my deepest feelings which I had previously, though less openly, stated in my letter of the previous Saturday (No. 88*), which for a similar reason met with the like silence. Be this silence accidental or of purpose, it equally affects my most anxious cares, since it leads me to fear

* The Nos. of these letters are wrongly given in the French.—*Ed.*

either that your feelings are too little affected by them, or rather that you feel yourself powerless to abate them. Although you are, in every respect, superior to Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, who yet even from a moral point of view had a high value, I cannot abstain from comparing myself often to the unfortunate d'Alembert, like me in inequality of age. Well known instances in the opposite direction do not help to reassure me, because I do not feel myself possessed of the qualities which have specially determined most of the rare exceptions to a law only too conformable to our nature. I beg you then to repair, with regard to so important an explanation, omissions which appear to me involuntary.

Farewell, my noble and worthy friend, you whom I cherish more and more, you whose divine ascendancy daily becomes more necessary for me. Farewell until to-morrow evening, and, above all, until our precious Wednesday, which I hope will in no way suffer from the effects of a happy evening on Tuesday.

To you my love and my life.

A^{te} COMTE

Félicie's rather strange manner on Friday of accepting my invitation for the opera has fortunately set me quite at my ease about her for nearly all the rest of the season. I hope then, that after next Saturday you will have no scruple, when your health does not prevent it, in allowing me generally to make use of my two stalls in accordance with the chief object of my taking them.

Letter 101. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday morning, 17 November, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I thought I had replied, in my letter of last Sunday, to the thoughts you have since expressed to me : this is the reason why I have only spoken of myself in the course of the week.

I have hardly any strength for thinking at present : allow me then to postpone to a later time the consideration of the great question you bring before me. I thank you for all the good and tender things you say to me—it all finds an echo in my heart,

which would be glad to be able to return you the good you have done it.

Farewell until this evening, to-morrow, and Wednesday ; keep as well as I wish you with all my heart.

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 102. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday morning, 18 November, 1845 (11 o'clock)

As I was sending Sophie to-day for information about your precious health, I did not wish to write to you lest I should oblige you to make an effort to reply, which would be harmful to you. But the recollection of my little fit of impatience yesterday, when I accused you of being too ceremonious, prevents my waiting until to-morrow to beg a special pardon for this unintentional offence. I began blaming myself severely for it almost directly it was committed ; your ill-health ought, in the first place, to have made me restrain myself, even if there had been more cause in it. By thus expiating this passing fault, I hope I shall not cause you to break a silence required by the state of your health. Even give up our friendly meeting of to-morrow if coming out seems to you at all imprudent ; if, however, you feel sufficiently well for it, the change might perhaps do you good.

Farewell my noble and unfortunate Clotilde ; I deeply share in all your troubles, physical or moral, and I bitterly regret that our mutual position renders me still so powerless to assuage them. May I at least never unknowingly aggravate them !

My life is yours.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 103. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday morning, 18 November, 1845

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND

Rely upon me for to-morrow ; I will come to your house in the omnibus ; I think it will do me a great deal more good than harm.

Forgive me for the shortness of my note yesterday ; forgive me for my ill-humour if ever you perceive any ; and depend, in spite of everything, upon my tender and sincere attachment, for it is too well founded ever to diminish. Our family evenings at home are becoming so uncomfortable because of various feminine susceptibilities, that I am going to propose your coming to see me on Saturdays (or Fridays if that suits you better), and that you should tell them that you will only come to the rue Pavée on Mondays. You might give your work as an excuse : they can have nothing to say against that. You will choose the time of day that suits you best and let me know it. If it can be Saturday, that will suit me as it will leave me two free days for my pen (Wednesday till Saturday). I am not suffering at all just now, except from the state of affairs in my family, which is only too evident. They are angry with me that I will not decide to accept what under a show of affection is the result of a quite opposite feeling ; and my mother makes herself ill with contriving schemes against my freedom. You see, my dear friend, how, in the midst of all this, I must cling the more to the support you afford me. Why can I not be sure of making you happy by a more intimate connection ! I would not hesitate to form it, but attachment, in a heart where passion is absent, is not a very strong feeling, from one point of view, while from another it has all the tenderness of sympathy.

I am a little better this morning ; indeed, my greatest enemies are still *the nerves*. Whenever I can manage to get rid of any outside pressure which tells upon them, I at once feel the beneficial result. I hope that nothing will again intervene to hinder your plan for next Tuesday.* Accept, my kind friend, the expression of my lasting attachment.

I embrace you affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 104. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday morning, 20 November, 1845 (8 o'clock)

I was able yesterday evening, my very dear friend, to mention your case to Dr. Pinel-Grandchamp (15 rue Saint Hyacinthe,

* Image of 25 November, 1845.—Ed.

near the place Saint Michel). Though I found him busy going to a confinement, I believe that I have duly prepared him for your visit; besides, I intend to refresh his memory by a special little note. So you can go there, any day from to-day, Thursday, at his usual hour for seeing patients (from 2 to 3 o'clock). If you go there to-day, and should the neighbourhood, either before or afterwards, inspire you with a charitable wish, I should as usual be at home, independently of this chance of a visit.

The enchanting thought of the supreme happiness which you are good enough almost to place at my disposal so agitates and overwhelms me that I feel myself still powerless to thank you sufficiently for the gracious tenderness which at once puts an end to my most painful doubts. Henceforward I shall sympathise with the lot of poor d'Alembert without its frightening me. I shall be happier than he, although I have not better deserved it except by my affection having been better placed. Further, my Clotilde, be assured that I shall never abuse your generous concession; it will not prevent my entrusting to you as heretofore the entire direction of everything between us. You certainly know the immense value which I attach to our complete union, but, without hoping that it can ever be equally precious to you, I ought to know how to wait, with scrupulous fidelity, for your considering it as opportune for yourself. To whatever period my respect may compel me to carry on my sacrifices, could I ask for a happiness which should not be entirely mutual? My tacit resignation will therefore allow your exquisite delicacy, stimulated by sincere affection, entirely to direct the much desired realisation of this incomparable pledge, whilst I even now consider the free assent you have given as constituting an irrevocable engagement between us.

You have, besides, rendered far sweeter this preliminary condition by the spontaneous emanation of your kindly thought in the fortunate proposal you have just made. By the transformation henceforth without special request, of one half of our regulation interviews into as many private conversations, you have rewarded, my well-beloved, even more than it deserves, the loyal reserve I have promised you. My well-placed confidence in the instinctive sagacity of your gentle guidance is by this proceeding naturally confirmed. Whatever momentary impatience the incompleteness of our situation might sometimes arouse in me, I should always end by soon recognising not only the general

superiority of your feminine tact, but the special advantage that a more complete appreciation of the whole of a position so delicate as ours must afford you.

Farewell, my noble and tender *fiancée*—my heart is too full of its new happiness to allow me to-day sufficiently to express its deep sense of gratitude. That can only show itself worthily by the entire and constant devotion of

Your happy philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

When she carries you this greeting, I hope Sophie will bring me back better news of the actual state of your health.

Letter 105. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 21 November, 1845

My brother told me yesterday, my dear friend, that you had been unwell. I am hoping that this has passed off and that we shall meet this evening as usual.

I thank you for the introduction to Monsieur Grandchamp : I was very much pleased with him, and I hope he will do something for me. Our consultation lasted a full hour ; he showed both skill and feeling, and I have already taken, with some *trepidation* two doses of a very powerful medicine which has proved of service to me. I am to go on taking it three times a day for a week, after which I am to see him again. He has also given me an embrocation for my back, which does not seem to me to suit my nerves ; it is an ointment of ammonia, and its effect should be to produce an irritation on the skin to relieve the heart and lungs. If I find the irritation excessive I shall keep to the mixture only.

Heaven grant that I may get well again ! I have enough with my mental troubles. If the two would start off together, I would wish them a good journey with all my heart.

Farewell, my dear philosopher—pray to your gods for the invalid, and reckon in return on her true affection.

CLOTHILDE DE VAUX

Letter 106. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Saturday afternoon, 22 November, 1845 (3 o'clock)

You must have been able, my dearest friend, to satisfy yourself last evening with regard to my illness, especially considering its cause. For the last six months an extreme nervous susceptibility, of which you very well know the real source, has left me at the mercy of every strong mental impression, whether good or bad. So the inestimable change that you have just brought about in our mutual relationship gave rise immediately to morbid agitation combined with prostration; this will explain to you the marked insufficiency of my thanks, which express so poorly my deep gratitude to you. But although this new situation had necessarily to begin in this way, it will by no means prevent the good and lasting effect of the beneficent shock caused by the fresh hopes you have inspired in my heart. Although I have as yet slept very little, I am beginning to feel its happy influence even to-day, and this is certain to increase with time. I am, besides, very well pleased with my present health on the whole. The only one of my organs which is really weak, the stomach, has benefited very much from the prudent diet required for the state of my nerves; this also is an advantage that I owe indirectly to you.

I am very glad that, as I had expected, you were pleased with Dr. Grandchamp. The breadth of intellect and even the high moral tone he possesses will soon establish your entire confidence in his very wide medical experience. In 1840 he did me a very serious wrong that I will tell you about: I have quite forgiven him for it, and in my own way, that is to say without ever letting him know it; so I have since found him specially willing to oblige me. Besides, he is quite a good enough judge on every point to be willing to take a real personal interest, independently of the recommendation rightly given by my avowed friendship for you. As I have no musical engagement to-night, I shall be able to go and thank him for his conscientious advice, and learn his real opinion of your constitution.

His treatment will, I hope, be decisive, and I advise you, as a rule, to follow it scrupulously. I can quite understand, however, the fear his ammoniacal frictions would give you at first. Although this powerful counter-irritant on the skin seems to me likely to be of great service to you, perhaps you yourself can really best judge of its advisability in a case of such unusual sensitiveness. As I see you at last decided to pursue with prudence and energy everything that may help to establish a cure, I will not urge the immediate carrying out of this rather strong prescription, if you continue to dread it. I do not really see any harm in first waiting for the effect of the mixture alone, if, when you pay your second visit, you simply tell him of this change ; and as this, although unusual, was not made without consideration, the doctor will perhaps congratulate you upon it. The extremely sensitive state of your nerves might well forbid such an accumulation of powerful remedies, especially at the beginning of the treatment.

While congratulating my Clotilde on being at last properly interested in caring for her precious health, I very much deplore the kind of hopelessness which is sometimes mingled with the unavoidable bitterness of the impressions arising from a situation so unworthy of you. The last sentence but one of your yesterday's letter shows a degree of melancholy depression which deeply afflicts me. Remember, my well-beloved, that there now exists one for whom your life will always have at least as much value as his own. While you showed yesterday a certain physical improvement, your attitude seemed to indicate a fresh increase in your domestic troubles. It is essential that you escape at last from this state of daily oppression, and you know how glad I should be to devote myself, if need were, to a freedom so well deserved. But be assured that it will not be long ere we attain it. For the present it is the re-establishment of your health that must absorb all your attention ; in addition to its own importance it will be of the greatest help in attaining the freedom so necessary to you, and it is the first condition for your carrying out the noble work which is to help in bringing this about. As much as possible then, turn your whole attention to it. The object is all-important, and success is assured, for you have no organic disease incompatible with complete health : all may be reduced to a deep-seated nervous derangement, which there is nothing to prevent your fully overcoming. As to the inward diversions which should help you to endure your present situation until the time of its approaching

transformation, permit me, my heavenly and unhappy Clotilde, to persuade you to depend still more on

Your affectionate husband

A^{te} COMTE

My indisposition has prevented me from finishing the reading of your brother's paper, which I had hoped to do the day before yesterday, so I shall only be rid of it to-morrow. After careful consideration, I have concluded that I am no longer obliged to declare the whole truth to anyone who has become incapable of understanding and making use of it. I shall then treat the author-novice with the precaution generally reserved for humouring vanities of long standing, although the need for this has caused him to sink very much from the position he originally held in my esteem. Besides the undeniable qualities he still possesses, which oblige me to attach direct importance to our personal relations, I shall specially not forget that he is your brother, although he does not adequately fulfil his principal duty in this connection.

Letter 107. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday morning, 23 November, 1845

You are the best of men ; you have been for me an incomparable friend, and I feel myself honoured, as well as happy, in your attachment. Only you have not understood me, nor been quite considerate enough in what concerns the freedom of my affection. For my part, I have accustomed myself to LOOK UPON NOTHING AS IRREVOCABLE IN LIFE SAVE DEATH,* so it is not through fear of its fettering me that I have not agreed to what you call your happiness. I have acted in the matter simply as becomes an honourable and pure-minded woman, because I know the dangers of my own nature. I have now done my part. As I love you most sincerely, I will sacrifice to you my wish for the mental repose of which I stand in need before I can prudently engage myself to you, if you still continue to regard this as hurtful to you. I am weary of suffering and of causing others to suffer ; this is the thought that is now wearing me out.

My body continues to improve a little every day ; I am keeping to the internal medicine until the next consultation.

* The Fifth of the Seven Maxims of Clotilde de Vaux.—Ed.

Good-bye, until we meet, my dear philosopher : keep well, and rely upon my unfailing attachment.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 108. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday* morning, 24 November, 1845 (5 o'clock)

If I am indeed the best of men, you cannot hope, my beloved, to overcome me in generosity, although you are certainly the noblest as well as the most adorable of women. The priceless offer you make me with such touching confidence, no doubt constitutes the height of friendship, especially in your sex : but, though it is generally less disinterested, love is capable of inspiring as great a degree of self-denial even in men, when they are of exalted souls. Nevertheless, whatever the price I attach to the full possession of your person, my affection will always be as respectful as it is deep ; of this I thought you had already experience. Taking any advantage of opportunity or of your involuntary feelings, even undue persuasion, on my part, or mere acquiescence on yours, would seem to me as little worthy of my character and age as of your eminent nature. It is after due consideration, as you so rightly say, that you should grant me an incomparable pledge, the principal value of which would, in my opinion, be its complete spontaneity. The admirable sacrifice you propose to make me is enough for the present to assure me of your inestimable and never-failing affection. I repeat to you, from the bottom of my heart, my firm determination to wait without any feeling of impatience until you also feel the desirability of a complete union.

How much I rejoice that we worthily had sufficient strength to resist the dangerous crisis of September ! A fall then, which could not sufficiently have altered your feelings, would have left me only a bitter regret, instead of which I now feel with delight that we are quite worthy of one another. If our noble contention in sacrifice could admit of witnesses without losing its proper character, it would do honour to human nature, for by this example both sexes would be urged to the mutual development of their

* Thursday in Original.—Ed.

highest moral attributes. But, although it must remain hidden from all, this tender strife will none the less retain its characteristic aptitude of assuring our real happiness, while still improving our inner natures. Let us then, continue this chaste union of our hearts for as long as you think fitting; when you shall at last consider the time come to put the final seal upon it, we shall thus have delightfully prepared the completeness and stability of the ineffable happiness of which I have always dreamt. As to the various physical inconveniences attendant upon the necessary continence, I shall continue to overcome them with a kind of joyful pride, as enhancing the value of the sacrifice rightly offered to the noble wife of my heart.

You, my adorable Clotilde, who have suffered so much, whom I should now be comforting for all your long and many griefs, you are even now occupied with an additional trouble in the fear of making me suffer! Ah! be content my beloved, and convinced that it is due to you that I have enjoyed, during the last six months, happiness both pure and intense, up to that time completely unknown to me. My fatal marriage must have already explained to you this unfortunate anomaly in a heart so much inclined for intimate affection. To find any emotions comparable to those of my present happy state, I must take my memory back to my early youth and my native place, where I underwent my only other experience of real love, soon nipped in the bud by the marriage of her who was, unknown to herself, its object; she must by this time be a grandmother, for I have never seen her again since the year you were born.* This is all that my past life affords that can in any way be compared to the feeling which will forever completely rule all the rest of my life, and that can never be called out but towards a being really pure. It is then only to you, my Clotilde, that I shall owe it not to have quitted life without having had due experience of the most delightful emotions of our nature. Even in the present state of your heart, I shall henceforward feel assured that my happiness will constantly tend to increase in strength as its security is more fully established. Can you then fear to make me suffer? How much I regret, my tender friend, having thus awakened your adorable sensitiveness by inconsiderate complaints, which, however, were rather deploring the fatality of our situation than any lack of tenderness in you! Until now I have shown you too little of my inward and constant gratitude for the powerful influence of

* See pp. 353, 365.

my moral resurrection, both as regards improvement and happiness. All the rest of my life will show, better than my feeble expression, a gratitude so sweet to feel.

As I have already told you, I spent Saturday evening with our worthy doctor. Although it was a family gathering, I was able to get a full explanation of your real condition from him. He fully confirmed my former opinion upon the soundness of your constitution, which only requires a careful continuance of active treatment to obtain complete and well-established health for you very soon. Your nerves seem to him in no way to forbid the friction with ammonia, especially in the part directed. However, I cannot blame your discontinuing it until the next consultation, when he will himself, I think, forgive your prudent abstention, which will allow the better his observing the effect of the medicine alone.

At last I conscientiously rid myself, yesterday, of your brother's manuscript, which will have cost me in all twelve tedious hours. Of course, I should be far from regretting them if his work had really deserved so much attention, or if I could only hope for its favourable reaction upon a future which concerns me. But it is sad to be thus compelled to a conviction that presumption and flattery have so soon caused an almost inevitable failure in a mind which certainly promised considerable genius. I shall now find no difficulty in taking the precautions I mentioned to you the day before yesterday, which are suitable to his case. My only real trouble will be from the dedication, which I cannot well refuse.

Farewell, my incomparable friend, it is with delight that I think how this exceptional week is to inaugurate the new course to be taken by our pure intimacy. A regular access to your sanctuary is now opened to me under most happy auspices, as a result of the noble exchange of kindly sacrifices announced in each of our letters.

Yours

A^{te} COMTE

I hope that your health will allow us to complete this inauguration on Saturday by your happy return to the Italian opera, where we shall probably long be free from any fear of the unlucky *King of Assyria*.

Letter 109. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, 30 November, 1845

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

I do not know whether it is for you that a folio has just been posted. It seemed to me, from a formal explanation that I have had this evening, that my mother had said nothing, or very little ; I can then tell you nothing of your part in this affair. My part was this : that seeing when I came in to-day the same appearance of coldness as was shown me yesterday, I made a pretty free declaration of my feelings on the matter, at table ; and I have made my mother agree to give me my allowance, if I continue to perceive the least shade of suspicion towards myself.

They persist in finding you very much changed towards a certain person, and they are working at my father in his favour, while bringing forward this pretext against me. I hope that you will continue to take no notice whatever of these foolish things on your Monday visits ; and then, I hope, as I said this evening, that this will be the end of it all, and that I shall not have to say anything more about it, even to you.

I am taking up my poor pen again to-day ; and if Monsieur Grandchamp comes to my help, I shall try to finish my troublesome work before two-thirds of December have passed. These, my dear friend, are the ostentatious schemes of your protégée, whose health, I am sure you will be glad to hear, continues satisfactory in spite of yesterday's expedition. I hope that you will not have suffered from it either, in spite of the extra fatigue that this treat brings upon you. As I have told you, I shall not accept it often, especially considering the rather delicate state in which this year leaves me. I must lay out my time and strength to the best advantage. I will bring you your flowers on Wednesday ; they are entirely made by the hands of friendship, and my porter's wife is sorry that I am not offering them to *God*. While making them, I remembered some verses which perhaps have some merit. I used to compose whole volumes of them. I put them in with this as a recollection of the past.

Yours with all my heart

CLOTILDE V.

LES PENSEES D'UNE FLEUR

Je nais pour être aimée : oh ! merci, bon destin !
Que les puissants mortels contre toi se déchaînent !
Aux pieds de tes autels que les vents les entraînent !
J'ai mes parfums et mon matin.

J'ai le premier regard du roi de la nature,
J'ai son baiser de feu, sa splendeur pour parure :
J'ai de la jeune Aurore un sourire de sœur ;
J'ai la brise naissante et la douce saveur
De la goutte penchée au bord de mon calice.
J'ai le rayon qui joue au seuil du précipice ;
J'ai le tableau magique, en grandeur sans pareil,
De l'univers s'ouvrant les portes du réveil.

Jamais le froid mortel ne doit tarir ma vie ;
Au sein des voluptés doucement je m'endors :
La nature me garde et me rend ses trésors ;
A son banquet d'amour je m'éveille ravie.

J'ai bien souvent embelli la beauté ;
Sur un cœur pur mon pur éclat rayonne,
Le plaisir me tresse en couronne,
Et le bonheur m'attache à son côté.

Quand le rossignol s'inspire
Sur ma tige en se jouant,
Pour laisser résonner son chant
La nature entière expire.

L'amour me dit tous ses secrets ;
J'abrite ses douces prières,
J'aide au bonheur de ses mystères ;
Je suis la clef des cœurs discrets.

O doux destin, si les soupirs profanes
De tes décrets pouvaient changer le cours,
Seule ici-bas, dans mes langes diaphanes,
Je renaîtrais au souffle des amours.

Des sombres tempêtes
Sauve-moi l'horreur ;
Que toujours la fleur
Sourie à tes fêtes !

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

TRANSLATION :

THOUGHTS OF A FLOWER

Kind fate I give thee thanks that I for love was born !
However lordly mortals shroud themselves in pride,
Some storm shall surely sweep them to thine altar's side !
Perfumes are mine and mine the morn.

To me the king of nature gives his first bright glance,
For me his fiery kiss, his splendid radiance.
For me a sister's smile from young Aurora's lip ;
For me the rising breezes, and the grateful sip
From the clear dewdrop sparkling on my petal's edge :
For me the rays that play on yonder rocky ledge :
For me the peerless glory of the magic scene
When through the gates of dawn the waking world is seen.

May no untimely frost my vigour slack :
But sleep enfold me in the midst of pleasures :
And nature spread before me all her treasures,
When raptured to her feast of love I wake.

Full oft have I embellished beauty's pride,
On a pure heart my colours purest show :
Pleasure delights to wreath me on her brow,
And happiness to bind me at her side.

When the nightingale doth trill
In joy upon my bending spray,
To let all listen to the lay
Nature herself is hushed and still.

To me his secret Love imparts
To me his sweetest prayers indites,
From me his mysteries gain delights :
I am the key of silent hearts.

O gentle fate ! If prayers from lips on earth
The steadfast course of thy decrees could move,
Then would I only ask for a new birth
From nature's lap, when breathed upon by love !

O grant me safe place
In tempest's wild hour :
That so may the flower
Thy festival grace.

Letter 110. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 2 December, 1845 (2 o'clock)

Although I have very little leisure at present, my dear friend, I do not wish the time of your valued weekly visit to come round without having sent a special reply to the kind letter which has brought me again, after a long week's interval, the happiness of hearing from you, and of writing to you. I was prevented from opening the letter directly, and was at first alarmed at its size, which I thought due to the recent difficulty with your brother. I was very pleasantly surprised to find it contained a charming composition, beautifully expressive of the graceful feeling natural to you, and philosophically remarkable, in my opinion, for its exquisite and spontaneous embodiment of poetic feticism to a degree that the maturity of human reason will always admit. I have as yet only read it twice, but the soothing tears it caused me to shed make me feel that it will not be long before I know it all through. The remarkable expression 'by heart' will never have been more applicable. It is already put away, with your precious letters, among my treasured relics, between the two parts of the admirable *Lucie*. If I had sooner associated, as I should have done, your touching imagination and your deep musical feeling, I should have perceived that the poetic ability for which I have already made you known to my friends, might be found in the form as well as in the ideas of your writings. Since you acknowledge many former attempts of the same kind, I hope that you will do me the favour of copying in your leisure times, all those that you think worthy of being preserved, for my little secret library.

Pursuing a melancholy reflection, such communications make me feel more and more keenly how important it is that you should be freed as soon as possible from a situation so little in conformity with your eminent worth. You have done well in firmly resisting an unjustifiable interference, of which, however, the result may be to hasten on the freedom which is indispensable for you. I must also congratulate you on your having determined again to make a start on *Wilhelmine*, as your health now seems to warrant it. Like yourself, I am very desirous of seeing a successful completion to this trying expression of your feelings, for besides that the work represents a situation so happily chosen, it should in some sort help to disburden your mind by tending to relieve it of the pressure of the past. The wholesome prescriptions of our

doctor allow me to hope that your pen will not again be hindered in this fresh effort.

I understand your reasons for making only a moderate use of the Italian opera during this period of work. I hope, however, that you will not allow this month to pass without another visit. You will understand my wish to remove the impression given you by the very feeble production you heard there on Saturday. After all, by this diversion, which should be of so much assistance in stimulating your powers, as far as concerns the time spent in it you would only miss a dull evening spent with your family. As for what concerns me, you know that no amount of fatigue can impair the happiness of being with you.

But for my bad nights I should be wonderfully well ; for my digestion was never so good before : my nervous trouble only continues because of this lack of sleep ; everything then may be reduced to an over-activity of life. No one but you really knows the cause of this, and the impossibility of my being cured of it by myself.

Farewell, my beloved ; do not be afraid that I am forgetting to thank you beforehand for the beautiful flowers you are going to bring me to-morrow, although this graceful work cannot last as long as that with which you delighted me yesterday. I must add that my pride is gratified by having had *God* as my competitor in this affair.

My everlasting and respectful love are yours.

A^{te} COMTE

I found your brother's short note when I came in yesterday. Although it is extremely polite, it is very dry and even very cold ; 'sir' takes the place of the former 'dear master,' and the 'devoted pupil' of other days has been reduced to the 'very humble servant.' But the pleasant evening we spent yesterday has fortunately prevented all the unfavourable impressions that this new tone might have aroused. I hope, as you do, that your recent explanation will completely put an end to this painful affair, in which I am particularly anxious to avoid your being seriously involved, even on the point where your generous nature would dispose you to assume the principal moral responsibility. However, the present letter naturally constitutes an excellent preparation for so delicate a conference, by disposing me to more kindly feelings towards all your relations.

Letter 111. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 4 December, 1845

DEAR FRIEND

You are so good to me that I often feel it a real pain that I cannot venture to be perfectly natural with you. Your direct or indirect allusions to a certain subject impose a painful restraint upon me which I find it difficult to overcome, and our relations with one another are sorely affected by it.

For my own sake as well as for yours, I wish I could respond to your wishes and feelings; but for your sake as well as for mine it is essential to me to feel myself free. My youth has been wasted by my physical weakness and the bitterness of my situation; and my present part of so indeterminate a nature is the only one now suited to me. Love is not an indispensable necessity in the lives men lead; you must live yours as if I did not exist in the world, and look upon me as a sincere friend who would now be well pleased if she could make some of your time happier. No one appreciates more than I do the worth of your heart and mind; and if any misfortune were to separate us, I should be as much to be pitied as you, in spite of the different character of our feelings. Let me then be friendly with you, as I wish to be; let us forget our sexes and think of our hearts. For some time this will demand a little effort on our part, afterwards our relationship will be much freer. I send you this greeting with all my heart; I hope you will receive it in the same spirit.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 112. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 4 December, 1845 (4 o'clock)

You left me ill-satisfied with myself yesterday, Clotilde, as to the sad disappointment I gave you when you expected to receive consolation from this friendly visit. I can only remove this painful impression to-day by an humble acknowledgment of my weakness, caused by ill health, a result of not having had enough sleep. Instead of removing your painful lowness of spirits by an affectionate effort, which would besides have reacted favourably upon my own melancholy, I was reduced to entertaining you with a criticism which, however well founded it be, always affords a very poor sustenance to souls like ours.

I hope it will be the last time that you will find in me a deficiency of moral energy so contrary to my nature and habits. My pleasant duty of protecting or rather of consoling you would be too ill-fulfilled if I could not set aside my own troubles in presence of yours.

Let me then, my adorable friend, try to do to-day what I could not properly accomplish yesterday, by pointing out to you the really slight cause there is for your gloomy apprehensions. I can easily imagine and I sincerely share your disappointment in thus seeing the resumption of your work stopped by physical incapacity, a work which, besides being so valuable intrinsically, is so important to you for the attainment of your much-needed independence. But the unfortunate necessity of further delay only proves that our impatience has antedated the time of your decisive return to *Wilhelmine*. The right time for this could only be found by experiment: if it does not succeed you must resign yourself, without risking the danger of fighting against it—to the prolongation, during a few more days, of the suspension which commenced a month ago. Besides, there is no reason why you should despair of the complete re-establishment of your health, towards which you have, during the last few weeks, made considerable, though insufficient, advance. Dr. Grandchamp's treatment has already been of much use to you, and there is no reason to believe that its efficacy has been exhausted. With regard to your domestic situation, which is so closely connected with your health, the late trouble, now brought to a close, led you to put all your energy into making an important step that we could not have believed a fortnight ago to be so near at hand or so easy to make. I mean that the announcement of your approaching independence should have been made and accepted. Besides, in the friendly visit which your good-natured brother Léon is about to make, your own insight allowed you to perceive good reason for some extension of the present transition, especially as it has lost much of its harshness. Everything then promises you, in all respects, a permanently better state of things, both important and near at hand. See nothing then, my noble and tender Clotilde, in yesterday's painful symptoms, but a sign of how necessary it is to continue the quiet treatment of a course of Scott so that you may the sooner take up again your active work upon our dear *Wilhelmine*.

I did not at all adequately show you yesterday the admiration and gratitude that your lovely flowers so well deserve. It was when I involuntarily bent down to smell them that I first really appreciated this charming gift. Whoever looks upon this masterpiece of good taste and skill will find difficulty in believing it the work of one endowed with such eminent qualities of heart and mind as seem naturally fitted to honour your sex in the direct service of Humanity. My respectful adoration would always have led me to appreciate this rare combination of the highest with the most graceful qualities, even though it had not supplied me with so many agreeable evidences of pure affection.

Among these precious proofs, I feel a fresh desire to speak specially to you of the charming composition, the whole of which has been indelibly stamped upon the memory of my heart by a third reading. My literary scruples were, however, not removed yesterday by your adherence to the form of the sixth stanza. I have thought it over, and I have come to the conclusion that when you wrote

' L'amour me dit tous ses secrets,
J'abrite *les* douces prières,
J'aime au bonheur ses mystères,
Je suis la clef des cœurs discrets.'

your real intention, both for metre and sense, was as follows—

' L'amour me dit tous ses secrets,
J'abrite *ses* douces prières,
J'aide au bonheur *de* ses mystères,
Je suis la clef des cœurs discrets.'

It is with this slight alteration that I have decided to fix this delightful stanza in my memory, unless you expressly gainsay it.

As regards this little masterpiece of grace and feeling, you must allow me to set aside all selfishness, by insisting that all who can truly appreciate it be invited to share the pleasure with which you first honoured your grateful admirer. The happy conclusion that you are planning for *Wilhelmine* will afford you the most fitting and natural occasion for publishing this enchanting *canzone*, of which Petrarch would have been the more jealous, that our language does not offer, it seems to me, any similar example of it. Do not blush, my incomparable friend, at my

ingenuous enthusiasm : besides you are too nobly constituted for any well deserved praise ever to become dangerous to you. You must all the more determine upon publishing this, because you have unfortunately destroyed all the other examples of your poetical disposition. Let me hope, however, that in the natural course of your work, your memory will be led, little by little, to realise the wish that I expressed to you on Tuesday for my personal pleasure.

Love and respect everlasting

A^{te} COMTE

I am promised *Semiramide* for Saturday ; my nervous state prevents my going to hear it to-day. This being so, I would propose your coming to hear this admirable work ; your sister-in-law knows it already. In any case I shall not otherwise dispose of your stall unless you send specially to refuse. In this matter I respect your prudent reserve, both mental and physical ; but the real purpose of my two seats obliges me, while avoiding all importunate insistence, to submit the employment of it to your decision, when we are concerned with such a masterpiece, as it will be performed only too seldom this season.

Letter 113. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 5 December, 1845

You spoil me, my tender friend ; it is I who was very cross at my last visit to you, and the letter I wrote yesterday morning was much more to make you forget it than to bewail myself on account of the reasons I explained to you. All this is nothing between affectionate hearts ; what would be serious would be to create unnecessary distresses for ourselves, and this is why I have up to the present time, so often and so strongly declared to you that cordial as are my intentions towards you, yet I am powerless with regard to them. Let us allow these serious subjects to rest during the necessary time, and avail ourselves of any resources at our disposal. You have given me a pair of red cheeks by thanking me for my poor bouquet ; I hope later on to replace it by a better one. Still, yesterday my strength was very fairly good ; I am well to-day too, and you must not think that I mean to make light of the real help that Monsieur Grandchamp's advice has

been to me. It is long since medicine has done so much for me : I shall be happy to tell him so, and to express my gratitude for it. The fact is that quarrels are the most effectual poison for me, and that even solitude seems pleasant in comparison. All my sensitiveness is in my heart and not in my intellect, whatever they may say ; things that pass unperceived by others, to me are real evils. I feel certain that I shall not always be like this (happily) ; physical sensitiveness brings on the other : peace is what is required to set me right.

This settled conviction urged me yesterday to take a step that I wished to put off until later ; I do not yet know the result. I sent, at dinner time, to tell them that I should stay at home ; and I wrote to my mother saying that, having duly considered the matter, I thought she would do me a real service if she would give me the cost of my board this month. I told her that I was working, that I stood much in need of quiet, and that, besides, this arrangement would give me more time. I am going to-day to hear the answer. In fact, I passed the day very well yesterday : I wrote peacefully, without hurry, and was able to rest well afterwards ; this is much better for me, and by this means I should be sure of doing well ; I hope that at last they may bring themselves to help me in the way I wish !

Farewell until to-morrow, my dearest friend ; I accept for *Semiramis* with very great pleasure, and if I am alone I will take a cab here at seven o'clock and come to fetch you. I am not treating you to it, you know ; but it will be convenient for both of us, I hope. I am very glad to retain my privileges as a widow in the eyes of my people. I am at my ease so, and one should keep up as much respect about one as possible.

I hasten to post this scribble to you ; and I hope it will find you in better health than yesterday's did. Rely upon my unchanging attachment, and upon the devotedness that I wish I were able to prove to you.

Make what use you like of my compositions. I read ' The Thoughts of a Flower ' to my people, and it was considered *rather strained*. A man of taste found the little piece pretty ; and, as you advise, I have given it a place in *Wilhelmine*. Here is another that I now remember ; the idea is not a very grand one, but I send it to you for the form.

Good-bye, dear friend, yours with love

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 114. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 5 *December*, 1845 (10 o'clock)

While writing to you last evening, dear friend, I felt very strongly that the too evident embarrassment in our friendly interviews does not arise only from the disturbances of health to which each of us is subject : but it was not for me to take the initiative in a more complete explanation. In the precious letter I received an instant after having dispatched mine, you at last, with affectionate sincerity, enter upon the direct and necessary consideration of the subject, which it now remains for me to continue to the end, thereby freeing us, I hope, from this strange embarrassment which renders our conversations less free, generally, than our correspondence.

You have rightly perceived the chief fault in the present state of our mutual situation, but you have not made it sufficiently clear, and consequently have mistaken the real remedy, because you attribute to me only, what belongs also, and in even greater degree, to you. I have promised you to wait, with loyal resignation, until your own spontaneous impulse should lead you happily to the fulfilment of my wishes ; and I think that so far I have strictly accomplished this honourable task. The fear of paining you or annoying you will make me henceforward still more carefully avoid every indiscreet complaint, and even any direct or indirect allusion to unavoidable suffering, both physical and mental, that I ought to be able to endure with firmness until the time when it may be satisfactorily ended. You have much increased my power in this respect by kindly informing me that this unavoidable postponement is no longer principally caused by the state of your heart, but rather by the exigencies of our fatal situation. I recognise as fully as you can do yourself the necessity for your personal independence before our final union can be accomplished.

By constantly thinking on this as a merely reasonable postponement, my daily victories will be very much helped, so that you may in the future be both happier and freer, even though the realisation of this desire should be put off further than seems at all likely at present. Until then my various sufferings will admit of no other real remedy than that to which I have been accustomed for the last six months, a remedy of whose sweet power I have so often, as yesterday and to-day, for instance, experienced

the effects ; that is to say, employing myself with loving you in your absence. Reading your letters, writing to you, cherishing almost to feticism the precious talismans I owe to you, and henceforward also repeating, with tears, your sweet *canzone*, this, my Clotilde, is always what calms my convulsive agitation, which perhaps would never come if I could live uninterruptedly like this.

As for the strange remedy you allow me, this advice honours your disinterestedness rather than your reason. To forget our sexes, to live as if you were not in the world ; in one word, to give my soul to you, and my body to others, all this is really impossible to me ; my heart feels itself incapable of such abstractions ; I can endure and I can respect, but I cannot lie or share myself. I can at present do nothing but see in you finally, as I have repeated in my morning prayer of affection ever since July : ‘ in the actual present, a true friend, and in the near future, an honoured wife.’ It is thus only that I can feel, because this only is true : all your provisional fictions lack consistence even of a temporary kind.

You exaggerate, Clotilde, the coarseness of the masculine nature, at least among nobler men. It allows us, certainly, pleasure without love, but only when the heart is free ; when it is really engaged, this coarseness becomes an impossibility to us. I long had recourse, like so many others, to this ignoble satisfaction, all sexual relations having ended, in my unhappy home, a year before the time when you were married. But since I have been attached to you there has been little merit in my chastity, though it has been sometimes painful, because I could not live otherwise. Let your blind generosity then cease to advise conduct the possibility of which is prevented by the involuntary empire you exercise over me.

Carrying still further than you do the general consideration of our mutual relations, to that which concerns, not our fatal situation, but the attitude we each take, I must now point out to you, with affectionate sincerity, the principal source, in my opinion, of the embarrassment you so rightly regret. It arises specially, I venture at last to say, from your want of confidence in my usual self-control. You clearly showed this to me during our memorable crisis in September, by going so far as to believe me capable, in my passion, of a violent solicitation ; and you have besides given me the right even now affectionately to reproach you with this, because you have never had the confidence openly

to retract this accusation, never having sufficiently felt that the simple confession of a wrong or mistake elevates us by clearing us of it. I love you as perhaps no one of my age has ever loved, and my maturity strengthens my noble affection by permitting me better to appreciate how worthily it has been bestowed. But love, in superior souls, increases respect and delicacy, instead of weakening them.

Even at the age of twenty I should have respected you as a sister, as long as your position or your own feelings demanded it. Why should I be less refined at the present time, since I am really purer than I was then, and even more tender without being less ardent?

Do not then prevent yourself from becoming to me, as you say so well, as kind as you wish. Leave off fearing me, my charming friend, as well as fearing yourself. I do not ask for less prudence or even less severity from you, but more confidence, and, consequently, more freedom. Be, in a word, my Clotilde, as unreserved when near as you are when at a distance, and very soon our chaste conversations will become still more pleasing than our precious correspondence, because they admit of more intimate and rapid development. I am incapable of ever abusing this friendly familiarity to forestall the end of the term that your wisdom has privately assigned to the full accomplishment of my wishes.

Yours entirely

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 115. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday evening, 5 December, 1845

I certainly do not explain myself well when I am writing upon the subject that we have been discussing for so long. My dear friend, it is not material freedom that I require before being able to dispose of myself; it is complete freedom of heart. It is true that you love me as I deserve to be loved, and in friendly affection I feel as much for you, but there it stops. The advance that I once made must have proved the sincerity of my intentions towards you, as well as shown you my powerlessness over them. This is why I asked you to live as if I were not in the world. If it could be right to give a positive promise for an indefinite time in the future, I would strictly examine myself to see if I could make it to you. There are moments when I feel a

wish to die free of any ties, for they have caused me so much suffering. I imagine that but few men would be satisfied with indefinite postponements: this is why I ask nothing when I can give nothing. The heart cannot be governed in the same way as the intellect. Only a woman who is light-minded or a coquette could use her uncertainty to take advantage of a man. I tell it to you now, as I have always meant you to understand it: *I do not know what my feelings will become* at present, I can do nothing that would be conducive to a man's happiness.

You who are so wise and so sympathetic, do you really believe that it could be an act of generosity to give oneself against one's will? for my part I do not think it. All marriages where there is only consent on one side end unhappily: perfect agreement is necessary for this bond.

This is what I must say to you; I do not want to secure your interest in me through a mistake. I love you dearly; but I do not know whether my attachment will increase to the point necessary for the intimacy you desire. Believe me; do not invent troubles for yourself like those from which I have suffered. Had my intellect been more completely positive, I should have adapted my heart to the exceptional situation in which I was placed. By feeding on my sadness I have destroyed myself, I have extinguished all enthusiasm within me, and I shall die, perhaps, consumed by a chimera. The only remedy for me at present is the distraction I have made for myself: only this can modify me.

Yours with all tenderness

CLOTILDE

Letter 116. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday afternoon, 7 December, 1845 (3 o'clock)

It was with difficulty that I obliged myself yesterday, my beloved, not to disturb the happiness of the day* with the distress your last letter gave me; besides, I had not then been able to give it sufficient attention. But to-day I cannot help affectionately declaring to you that, notwithstanding the delicate tenderness and the noble sincerity with which it is stamped, this hasty reply seems to me to have been written much too hurriedly. While not believing you exempt from all feminine changes of mind, I did not expect such a change in the precious hopes suggested

* Image of 6 December, 1845.—Ed.

or fostered by several of your recent letters, especially when, on the 23rd of November, you actually consented to leave to me the decision on the point of the immediate sacrifice of all your scruples, which nothing but my sense of generosity determined me to continue respecting. You will feel how ill Friday evening's letter agrees with that of the same morning, if you attach sufficient value to our past to take a copy of your letters, a practice by which I should gain still more advantage than you. Since the crisis in September, you had only answered me with mere postponements, vaguely expressed it is true ; it is only in this last reply, which yet breathes so much affectionate feeling, that you find yourself unable to assure me of one day making your sentiments conform to mine.

It seems to me, however, that this change may be explained by the fact that at the time you were writing to me you had just been suddenly placed in quite a new position, by your mother having unexpectedly agreed to your reasonable request for temporary independence. This unforeseen approach towards personal freedom naturally made you dread that I should begin to hope for a similar acceleration in the realisation of the incomparable pledge that my last letter seemed to suppose was only waiting for this indispensable preliminary. Hence, you have been led to hasten in bringing forward the obstacles caused by the inward state of your feelings, as being even stronger than those caused by your material position. But allow me, my tender and sincere friend, to remind you that my conduct all along, and especially lately, has not deserved that you should take such a precaution. When I specially connected our final union with the time of your complete material freedom, I presupposed that you would have, in the meantime, attained the freedom of heart you required : my November letters leave no doubt upon this matter.

It is, however, important that we should state clearly, once for all, the nature and extent of this indispensable freedom. For the last three months I have looked upon you as morally free, in the sense that your heart is sufficiently disengaged from its former attachment ; it seems to me that you have no intention of going back on what you have often told me in this matter. Only you have not given me a like place in your heart : this is in my opinion its present condition, which, unless it is so viewed, would seem to have made no advance in the course of the

year. Now, I do not hesitate, my beloved, to calm your anxiety afresh, by renewing the assurance so firmly laid down in my last letters, that this preparation of your heart is as important as the other for my true happiness. I have never asked you to give yourself against your will. Besides, whatever may be my private opinion upon the natural aptitude of this irrevocable concession to effect a change in your own feelings by removing your principal causes of hesitation, I shall always be able to wait, at the cost of the most painful efforts, for your complete free will to grant it to me, as this alone can insure me complete happiness. Do not then fear, dear Clotilde, that the sudden independence we are beginning to enjoy will draw upon you any indiscreet solicitations from me now ; even though I could suppose your freedom, as yet only temporary, to be permanently established.

Indefinite postponements of course do not suit many men, as you rightly remark. But I belong to the very small number of those whose superior organisations allow them to endure such delay, even should it never come to an end, when the motives have the same purity and firmness as those which certainly exist between us. Only, I trust that the affectionate power you have over me will never altogether take hope away from me ; I could not bear to be left without it. Six months ago, after hearing your noble and painful confession, I sincerely tried to transform my love into simple friendship, and at first I was simple enough to think that I had attained this object. The fatal crisis of September, by reviving my dearest hopes, soon enlightened me as to the irresistible nature of my real feelings for you. Although control over oneself becomes in most things greater as one grows older, this cannot be the case where so exceptional a first love is concerned, a love too, so well bestowed as mine. I learnt however from this memorable episode that, not possessing youth and beauty, I suffer an insuperable disadvantage in this respect. Neither before that time nor at any time since have I been able to accomplish the chimerical transformation of which I had dreamt in my philosophical pride and strange inexperience. I have even ceased to try for it any more, and have freely given up my heart to the affectionate plans you have permitted it to form for an indefinite future : besides, I have never been able to believe that the power of loving passionately could, at your age and with your eminent nature, be as extinct as your misfortunes have made you fear.

Whatever be the final issue of this noble passion, I shall not regret it if it holds me all my life ; I already owe to it, and accept for this, divine Clotilde, my renewed gratitude, that I at last have become worthy to experience all that there is of purest and deepest in human feelings. But cease, I pray you, to advise a forgetfulness of our sexes and material diversions ; to me they are henceforth equally impossible. How many ascetics, still vigorous, have practised strict chastity for a much longer time under the influence of their chimerical convictions : why should not better motives allow me like victories, to whatever length of time you prescribe their continuance ? Let not these daily efforts make you fear our innocent familiarity, as I had reason to complain you did after you lately gave me encouragement for the future. It is never in your presence that I have felt sensual desires ; I am then entirely given up to the pleasure of contemplating you. You may grant me, noble and tender friend, without any danger, everything a sister allows, that is to say, all concessions which are not irrevocable. Far from exciting me, they will assist my victories, by making our friendly meetings more delightful, in which, I venture to repeat, you do not yet honour me with sufficient confidence.

For ever entirely yours

A^{te}. COMTE

Letter 117. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday morning, 8 December, 1845

I can declare to you, upon my honour, that I had no other intention in the letter you quote from, than to make you the offer of a promise that now seems to me ill-considered ; read all my letters since September over again, and you will see that I have not varied, my dear friend. The only step that I have to regret you know as well as I do. It makes me understand that something more than mere affection (if we put love out of the question) is needed to bring one to act upon such a resolution.

I have had experience of life in its most typical conditions. I made a marriage of convenience, and I can truly say that I would almost as soon have lived single. For me, then, to change my condition, it is essential that I should *wish* to do so. You ask

me to describe, once for all, the nature of my inclinations : I cannot lay them before you more clearly than this.

I consider you the best and the truest of men ; what has seemed to you hesitation on my part has never been anything but the dislike of paining you. In other circumstances I have spoken out once for all ; no man can accuse me of the slightest coquetry or feminine lightness. Rely upon my heart, and since both are agreed in not wishing it, let us speak no more of the future.

We shall meet this evening, my dear friend ; my affection has induced me to yield to my family on some points, and this has had a good effect. It is always so sad to distress people, whatever be the degree of affection one bears them, that one can very well afford to make some small sacrifices of one's dignity when they tend to repair the harm done.

If you receive this letter in time, please remember to bring back my umbrella, so that I can give you back yours, which perhaps you are wanting.

Goodbye, dear friend, keep well ; *Sémiramis* tired me a great deal more than *Pasquale*. To-day I am pretty well ; I am going to take advantage of this to go to Monsieur Grandchamp's. I want him to perform a small surgical operation for me which I am rather dreading ; it is to relieve two of my toenails which have become ingrown. Our doctor thought it would be necessary to cut the surrounding flesh ; we shall see what this one will think of it.

Letter 118. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 9 December, 1845 (3 o'clock)

In spite of its involuntary omissions, mistakes, and obscurities, the reply which was waiting for me last evening deserves my special gratitude, in consideration of the unreasonableness with which I had already begun to reproach myself in the first part of my long letter of Sunday last. When blamed for undue haste, you might well reply to me with a similar accusation ; the fault in my case was nowise extenuated by that quickness of thought which brought out so well the admirable spontaneity of your excellent letter of Friday evening. Reading it over again more carefully, I at last felt from it that no woman ever exhibited so perfect a model of scrupulous candour and friendly affection. Besides, it is, as a

rule, so difficult to express clearly what one feels, that I cannot in the least blame you for the painful illusions which I have suffered through your insufficient explanations, from among which I can now trace the fact, that since September your attitude has not in the main varied to any serious extent. An insufficient confidence in my moral control of myself really constitutes your only wrong towards me, and this is shown by the constraint of our meetings, and not by the freedom of our correspondence. Your injurious suspicion of September, and your persistence in never freely confessing the injustice of it, would render this unfortunate disposition incorrigible, unless a private and special examination enabled you daily to call it to mind. This is the only portion of your fine nature that still demands the serious intervention of your powerful reason: allow me strongly to advise you, once more, to effect this improvement, in the interest of our mutual relations.

The secondary crisis, which is ending, I hope, to-day, and that my excitement had brought on as the result of the unintentionally misleading tone of your letters, will serve me at last as a means of better appreciating our true position to one another, so as rightly to enjoy the present, whilst reserving any more happy fortune for the future. Inspired, though alas! very late in my life, with the noble love which alone was destined entirely to rule me, I must worthily support my inevitable fate, however painful it may prove. I now at last recognise the necessity, both for your sake and my own, of definitely preparing myself for the least favourable, though most probable form which our relationship will take, by supposing that your heart will never allow us to pass beyond this unequal exchange of affection, where love is set against friendship. I hope that courage will never be wanting in me to pursue this way of life, and we must henceforward try to develop all the sweetness of which it is capable while accepting all its conditions. Above all, it requires a thorough and lasting grasp of our mutual situation. We must both be quit of all necessity for pretence or dissimulation, having never anything but honourable feelings to confess. Let there be then no question of the chimerical transformation of my irresistible love into a peaceful friendship, nor of forgetting the sex which plays so important a part in your eminent nature, nor of living as coarsely as if you did not exist. If any comparison were wanting, I should prefer that of betrothed lovers separated by indefinite obstacles,

or a married pair compelled by unavoidable circumstances to live as brother and sister. But it is better not to compare a case so exceptional as ours is in every respect, to anything else. Setting aside every useless fiction, let us start always from the actual position and endeavour to improve it as much as possible, the one as a lover, the other as a friend, both besides being equally sincere, and equally affectionate, each in our own way.

As to the various difficulties or dangers of an inevitable chastity, which may be a permanent necessity, I think I may undertake to overcome them gradually, without my health receiving any great harm. I shall besides make it an object, according to my usual custom, to convert this new condition of life into an habitual source of inward personal improvement, chiefly moral, but physical too at the same time.

Instead of forgetting our difference of sex, let us by common consent put this to its noblest purpose, the mutual improvement of our own natures, both intellectual and affective. Each of us possesses, one in the heart, the other in the mind, a superiority which the other naturally lacks, but each may acquire the other's superiority by a carefully arranged reciprocal cultivation, the slow and continuous progress of which forms in the course of ages one of the finest productions of human wisdom, both collective and individual. Let us make a habit of joining, my incomparable Clotilde, in these sublime conceptions, which directly unite our noble private development to the whole of the great human evolution.

The lover and the friend may truly both find here an inexhaustible future of greatness and tenderness however long their noble life together may last. If ever I had the misfortune of losing you, I ought to oblige myself to go on living after you, in order to make the world sufficiently appreciate the eminent nature which otherwise would remain too little understood. But if, as I hope, you survive me, to you will belong, more than to any other friend, the noble duty of well judging, for the sake of posterity, this deeply sensitive heart which, although it has been superficially taxed with austere coldness, was always up to the level of the intelligence that has been generally admitted to

Your tender philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

When Sophie brings you this letter, she will return you your umbrella and fetch mine.

Although I am too unwell to go to my lesson this morning,

I feel better now, and I hope that this passing indisposition will not interfere with your welcome weekly visit to-morrow.

Letter 119. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday morning, 10 December, 1845

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND

How grateful I am to you for so kindly accepting the evil with the good that comes to you from me ! In return for your noble conduct you may depend upon the tenderest attachment that I am capable of feeling. If love is the most impetuous of feelings, it is not the only one that is strong and sweet ; and I feel now that I have for you more than a relation's affection.

I am doing my best to let you have this in good time. Rest yourself to-day. For my part, I have so much discomfort that it makes me dread even the omnibus. I will come and see you on Saturday instead, and will arrive in good time, so as not to interfere with your evening.

While I think of it, Heaven keep me from again forgetting the refutation that I have thought of an hundred times ; but it has always escaped my memory because I thought it so unnecessary. How can you think, with the knowledge I have of your character, that I should ever have believed you capable of committing a brutal action ? Violence is not even a part of our present-day manners, however anti-chivalrous they have become. Indeed, you are my debtor in the matter of this suspicion, and I send it back to you just as it came out of your own mind.

In return, I place you with all my heart upon the pedestal which you are raising for me ; it better becomes you than me. If I make a point of claiming something taken from me, it is because I do not feel too rich and cannot afford to lose anything ; I know myself better than those do who judge me.

I hope you will not miss me too much to-day. Take good care of yourself, my good friend, and give me news of yourself. One must be wanting in the power to make you happy if one does not do it. Let your heart and reason, in repeating this, love me only as I deserve to be loved.

I clasp your hand very affectionately. May I be able to prove to you better than by words my affection, esteem, and

respect! Whatever be our fate, I hope that death alone will break the bond founded upon these feelings; and I offer you the sweetness of this thought in exchange for those of which I have deprived you. Goodbye, my dear friend; we shall meet on Saturday. I am always affectionately yours

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 120. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday afternoon, 10 *December*, 1845 (5 o'clock)

Your affectionate letter of last evening only reached me, my beloved, just at the time when I was beginning to expect you as usual. Whatever be the value I attach to it, it does not prevent me, in spite of your hope, from feeling your unexpected absence very much, although I like to think it unconnected with any trouble, especially physical. If it were otherwise, you would have proposed to me to change my visit from Saturday to Wednesday, while you have thought for yourself of the opposite exchange for this week.

You would not have made any other arrangement unless there had been some serious reason, of which you would have informed me. Even had the small surgical operation to be performed by Monsieur Grandchamp hindered you from going out, it could not, it seems to me, have prevented your receiving my visit. I am then led to conjecture that, either you wished to avail yourself to the utmost of a favourable disposition for work, or that our recent explanations made you dread a particular restraint in our conversation. In either case I should very willingly forgive this innocent feminine artifice for which your excellent letter is sufficient compensation.

In order to remove every unpleasant impression connected with it, I must return once more to the injurious suspicion of September, the injustice of which you only now recognise, whilst you deny that it originated with you. If you were to read, as I have done, your letter of the 9th September, you would there find, among several others, that I could quote on the subject, this decisive sentence: 'If you should constrain me, by any means whatever, to yield to you on the point in question, I would never see you

again in my life.' Although this letter was clearly the result of an evident state of exasperation and anxiety, you see that the suspicion was really imagined and expressed. It was so opposed to my feelings, and at the same time so new an idea, that I could never of myself have believed it possible. When I several times expressed to you my affectionate pain at it, you ought, Clotilde, freely to have acknowledged this passing wrong, excusing it as having been called forth by pressing circumstances, instead of representing it now as having never existed except in my mind. Such acknowledgments, always compatible, especially between us, with full dignity of character, may very well afford a new source of improvement, denied to those who have never erred. It was not without deep, though empirical, reasons that Catholicism set up humility as a virtue; positive morality will, with suitable corrections, carefully develop a characteristic so much in agreement with the true theory of human nature.

Having completed these painful explanations upon a subject which need trouble us no further, I find in your precious letter nothing further to which I need reply except your injunction 'to love you only as you deserve to be loved.' I hope that you are not thinking of thus restraining my attachment and returning upon the useless advice of transforming my love into friendship, although this seems to me the only way of interpreting your suggestion.

As I said to you yesterday, we must most carefully guard against any misunderstandings in regard to the state of our feelings.

Let us accept our situation as it is, with all its attendant circumstances, striving together to draw the best we can from it, as well as to improve it gradually. Do not conclude from your present incapacity to return my love that my love is not to continue. I can no more stifle my feelings than you can increase yours. Let us each then openly show that degree of affection which the nature of our respective destinies permits. This habitual and entire freedom constitutes the first condition of the normal development of our affectionate intimacy, the fatal inequality of which can never be made to disappear by a mistaken disguise of our real feelings.

If our different misunderstandings had not caused me so much pain there would have been no excuse for my consuming in explanations, which almost assume a character of something

like recrimination, the greater portion of a reply that I should much have preferred to consecrate entirely to the heartfelt gratitude excited by your touching declaration of the precious sentiments which this time I have no doubt of fully understanding. Your excellent heart has spontaneously guessed the secret need of mine. In engaging myself to you for life without requiring the same degree of affection, I necessarily wish for a pledge capable of replacing the one which the state of your feelings forbids me, alas! perhaps ever to expect, that of the intense mutual raptures, the binding nature of which institutes, in my eyes, their principal purpose. If, to you, the height of melancholy can go no further than a death without a single social tie, what must we think of the unfortunate being who feels bound for ever to another that remains absolutely free? It was essential then, in order that our intimacy might develop happily, that, as the most natural way is forbidden us, your loving ingenuity should discover some other means for insuring me against the fear of abandonment, and for preserving me from jealousy. This, I hope, will be the lasting effect of your priceless letter, and especially of the solemn engagement which completes its holy declaration. Yes, my honoured friend, I delight in repeating it with you, death alone will break the bonds of our affection, whatever be the ultimate form they may assume during the course of our respective destinies. Receive on your noble brow the chaste kiss with which I seal this delightful engagement. Farewell, my Clotilde, I shall expect you on Saturday.

Love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Allow me to remind you specially that on Saturday I shall be free by 11 o'clock, and obliged to dine at half-past three.

I thought to have had a talk to-day about the recent concessions made to your family, which you mentioned to me in your Monday's letter. Although you did not tell me the nature of these concessions, I congratulate you on the affectionate moderation you have used, which is so worthy of you, and will besides, I presume, establish more firmly your well deserved independence instead of lessening it in any way.

The gastric trouble from which I was suffering yesterday has already almost given way to my usual treatment, abstinence and rest. As to the sleeplessness and the convulsive troubles, these

are no worse. The progress lately made by our hearts towards a condition of really lasting stability, will not fail, I am sure, considerably to calm my nervous agitation. I hope you will not leave me until Saturday uninformed about the state of your precious health.

Letter 121. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 11 December, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

As I said to you before, I should have had difficulty in coming to see you yesterday. I was suffering from considerable internal irritation, for which I have treated myself while working at my fireside ; the upper regions are well, and that is so much to the good. But although I am on my legs again, much walking is still impossible for me ; it at once brings on the pain from which I have just been suffering.

Here is my explanation and excuse upon one point. As to the other, I can just recollect the passage you quote to me from one of my letters, but only as a momentary impression—and I wrote it in reply to a sentence in one of yours. Be assured that I fear nothing in our mutual relations but that which might disturb your repose or create new troubles for myself. I no longer feel myself capable of enduring patiently, and my chief aim is to avoid all occasions and causes of emotion. I know very well, my dear and honoured friend, that I cannot set a limit to your affection according to my own wishes ; all I wish is to take no place in your love to which I cannot justly lay claim ; I know how much of ourselves we put into this enthusiastic sentiment ; it is fortunate when hatred does not take its place.

The changes in my family arrangements go no further than matter of form, and this is enough for me. I had written a word of regret to Max upon the innocent part I had played in the proposal that had offended him. He was touched by this little acknowledgment, and now we meet without any constraint. Léon will not arrive until the first of January ; I shall probably go back to them for the six weeks he is to stay with us. Between now and then I should very much like to finish my *Wilhelmine*. The long interval I have had without working at it has taken away my spirit and fluency in writing.

This is unfortunate for me from every point of view. It is becoming more and more necessary for me to free myself by my own effort. I feel I have all the brains required : it is this that gives me courage. I, who have never yet had ambition for money, what a value I shall set upon the first I earn !

Monsieur Grandchamp does me more and more good and his care is really a present that I owe to you. He has dressed my feet with a plaster which will serve the purpose in the end without the need of any cutting. As to my lungs, he guarantees them, and, from the good he has already done me, I believe he is right. My letter had a very good effect on both sides.

I shall be very glad if I find you well on Saturday, my dear friend. I think you like my coming to you quite as well as my letting you come here. I prefer it, it gives me a change, and I can go half the way on foot. On Monday I went to Monsieur Grandchamp's on foot, and came back in the same manner : that was what did me harm. One is in such a hurry to believe oneself strong.

I tenderly offer you my hand, and love you with all my heart.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 122. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 12 December, 1845 (11 o'clock)

Your yesterday's letter affords me a favourable opportunity, my beloved, of better renewing my profound gratitude for your inestimable declaration, without being obliged, as I was the day before, to unite my loving thanks with any explanation unconcerned with the subject. The secondary crisis which you have thus just ended, completes our great crisis of September, since when, to tell the truth, I have always been more or less in severe mental, and consequently physical, agitation. Henceforward, our sincere affection, equally pure on both sides, is about to develop a real character of profound stability, likely to procure us all the peaceful happiness compatible with our respective destinies. The present state of your heart not allowing us the most natural pledge, your affection has led you to find one purer, and I hope no less effectual, for ensuring me against any future preference more in conformity with the natural bent of your feelings. I shall now cease to be tormented by the

almost continuous dread of losing that tie upon which I feel more and more my principal inward life depends. It is no longer a question between us of a temporary happiness ; our intimacy at last acquires, by our free mutual consent, the imposing grandeur of an union which can never end but with life. Such a result does not seem to me now to have been too dearly bought by the various storms which have naturally prepared for it. I hope also that any too passionate desires will disappear simultaneously with the hope of their meeting as yet with a worthy satisfaction. By this means I depend upon soon recovering my complete mental well-being, without ever abandoning myself to coarse satisfactions, which are fortunately rendered impossible to me by the noble character of my love. Accept then, my dearest Clotilde, this renewed and pure expression of my gratitude for a result that I was far from expecting would so soon be attained.

According to your choice of times, I shall expect you to-morrow. It really matters very little to me, after all, if we see one another at my house on Saturday instead of at yours, or the other way about on Wednesday, provided that these exceptional interchanges do not make me lose one of either of our precious weekly meetings, as they have done this week. In this connection I must to-day repair an involuntary omission in my last letters by giving you my special thanks for the happy arrangements we have at last completed. Your wise affection has now imprinted on each of our meetings its real periodic character ; even the weekly order they follow, at your parents' house, at mine, and at yours, reproduces an interesting picture of the natural progress of our sacred intercourse. As regards that one of the three which is henceforward of the least importance to us, a special sense of gratitude will always recall to my mind, in addition to its own value as a precious sanction by the family, that it was for a long time the only resource possessed by my love, after having been the occasion of it.

I heartily congratulate you on your recent attitude towards your brother. Your moral superiority must specially show itself with regard to him by your keeping better feelings for him than he has for you. On this subject I must myself thank you very much for having made me, in this serious matter, fulfil towards him a higher duty than his incurable self-sufficiency in science demanded from me. The lesson was risky in many respects ; I fear very much that it

will be of but little use in the end ; but my conscientious intervention will, thanks to you, be to the end worthy of me. You have, moreover, by your action, saved me from an undesirable dedication, and freed me for a long time from embarrassing consultations.

The improved condition of your health on the whole lays me under new and pleasant obligations to Dr. Grandchamp, whom I congratulate myself upon having introduced to you ; I felt sure that his care would cure and encourage you. He was impelled at first by his friendship for me, but now he knows you well enough to take a real and direct interest in you. When I see him again, he will thank me for such a patient.

You will be inclined, no doubt, to return to the family table during the approaching visit of your amiable Léon. But, in order to lose nothing of your present advantages, I advise you always to represent this return as only temporary, and determined by this sisterly motive, and moreover to insist on its cessation when this motive is removed. I hope with you that, before this happy visit, you will have completed your present important work without injuring your precious health, in spite of the delay naturally resulting from a forced discontinuance of it.

Continued want of sufficient sleep did not, thanks to you, make me feel disinclined yesterday to go to hear a composition exactly suited to my nervous condition, the charming *Sonnambula*, which I had not heard for two years, your brother having had my place when it was performed for the first time. If, as I suppose, they give this tender and graceful masterpiece again to-morrow, will you come and hear Persiani and Mario in their best parts, in which they were yesterday really admirable ? As you are coming in any case to me to-morrow, you can fill up the day by accepting a friendly dinner, to which I promise to make no additions, and after that we could walk to the Opera-house ; for by a happy chance I find that I am unexpectedly then set free from my duties at the Polytechnic. This little treat, almost as unforeseen for me as for you, would, it seems to me, make a good beginning to the final *régime* of our hearts. This delightful piece ends too at 10-30, and you would be in by 11 o'clock : and it is not of a kind to tire you like *Semiramis*. However, I shall not at all like to risk upsetting your health or your work by this. Although it would be a great pleasure to be the means of your enjoying this delicious work, the best performed of all the present masterpieces, I shall reckon upon

you for some other Saturday if you think you ought not to accept for to-morrow. Two wretched new pieces, worse, it is said, than *l'Assyrienne*, are about to forbid all people of good taste entering the opera for several weeks. In case you decline, I should offer my stall for to-morrow to my hostess at Sceaux, or to some other lady, being too little pleased with Félicie to propose it to her except for third or fourth choice. So I shall be glad to know exactly your wishes on the matter as soon as possible.

Farewell, my tender and noble friend, honoured and eternal companion of my heart : we shall meet to-morrow in any case.

Love and respect

Ate COMTE

Letter 123. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday evening (11 o'clock), 12 December, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

I hope I am in time to ask you to dispose of your stall for to-morrow. I went out for an hour during the day ; most likely it was just then that Sophie came. My porter, not having seen me come in, only gave me your letter this evening when I went to see my family. I am replying now on my return and I am arranging for its despatch at six to-morrow morning.

I thank you with all my heart for your two invitations. Let us postpone all pleasures of this sort until later. I am in quite a serious phase : it must be allowed to work itself out.

I am pleased with, and at the same time, surprised at the thanks you address to me. Have I delayed so long to express my sincere attachment to you, and my wish that it may last as long as we do ? If this is all I can promise you, I do it boldly at least, and with sincere feeling. I am so accustomed to have my freedom attacked, that I have come to fearing my own influence over it ; and the idea of an engagement lightly contracted would poison the little repose that remains to me. Let us then be affectionate friends, and without plans for the future. Feeling cannot be ruled beforehand like duty ; moreover, the two are very unlike. In attachment, in friendship, duties are only sentiments ;

but in marriage they put on a serious character, and we must take them as they thus are.

Good-night, my dear friend; we shall meet to-morrow. Eleven o'clock is striking, and my porter's wife is coming to fetch these few lines.

Letter 124. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, 14 *December*, 1845*

I was taking up my pen to thank you for the kind and hospitable reception you gave me yesterday, my dear friend, when a fine lady interrupted me by knocking at the door. It was Mme. Marrast, and she really showed herself most friendly. She expressed very strongly her wish to see me, and her regret at having been unable to return my call sooner; she has only been going out a little while, she told me. She questioned me about the papers she saw, and asked me if I had *finished* anything. I judged, by her *manner*, that I shall not be ill received on my return to the *National*. I am glad of it: you know I am not only flattered by it, but sincerely pleased.

I wish I could get to work in a more business-like manner; I have ideas, but the actual *doing* is still new to me; and this is what tires me for very little result. It will come to me as to others, and then perhaps I shall, like them, fully earn my living.

How much I associate you with the outcome of all this! I shall never forget in how many ways you have made my path easier to me, and I should be very *proud* to be able in my turn to help you to some pleasures.

I had all these thoughts in my heart when I left you yesterday: so do not put them down as a result of Mme. Marrast's visit. Every time that I perceive in you signs of my own past suffering, I have been angry with fate for contriving pain of every kind for me. But if by means of my friendship I ever succeed in making you love it, I will give fate in exchange my very best thanks. Take great care of yourself, my dear friend. If I were not afraid of hurting you, I should ask you to let me have my Wednesdays for three or four weeks, and I would come and see you on Saturdays. This would give me several days in

* The original is undated—See Letter 125.—Ed.

succession for working. Then if by any chance I were obliged to take a rest, I should employ the time in coming to see you for a minute. See, then, if you can agree to this. You know I treat you as if you were a near relation. We will take up our usual ways again as soon as the heroine is in the press. We shall meet to-morrow, and you will write to me afterwards. The peace of my solitude is very helpful to my treatment, and I am hoping not to die out like the dry wick of a lamp.

I embrace you tenderly

CLOTILDE

Letter 125. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday, 16 December, 1845 (3 o'clock)

On account of a delay in the post, my dear friend, I have only now, to-day, at 1 o'clock, just received your last letter. On this occasion I must specially repeat my general advice to you to date your letters exactly, so as to spare me any confusion or misunderstanding. For, on account of this unusual delay, the entire absence of date in your letter made it difficult for me to find out that you had written on Sunday.

I congratulate you very sincerely upon the friendly visit paid you by Mme. Marrast, for I see in it, as you do, a happy augury for your approaching return to the *National*. However, I very much doubt whether the high tone of your work will suit people of this sort well enough to enable you to make a lucrative business out of it, at least not out of the present newspapers, beyond the sphere of which it seems to me that your success, even of a material kind, must be achieved. The important effect that *Wilhelmine* will have by connecting you directly with your worthy uncle, appears to me, to tell the truth, the chief personal result that we must expect at present from the publication of this valuable work, except as a starting point for the celebrity you have a right to anticipate. It would be with deep regret that I should see you approaching too near so dangerous a *milieu*, which is at bottom no more worthy of you intellectually than morally, and the habitual contact with which would only serve very much to diminish your value from every point of view. At the present day very few are endowed with the rare talent of supporting themselves honourably by their pen : a mercenary end

in view tends to degrade the most eminent works. If the *National* accepts *Wilhelmine* more decidedly than your other essays, we shall have two reasons for rejoicing, both for the present service it will render us, and still more because it will make the final publication very much easier. This, of course, must not be dependant on journalism. But in case these fresh advances come to nothing, as they easily may, do not be too much annoyed and do not make any serious concessions in the matter : we shall certainly be able to publish your book by some other means.

As to your proposal of a temporary renunciation of our dear Wednesdays, you put it in such a way that I cannot help consenting, even for to-morrow ; for I could never properly enjoy a visit which you felt was losing you time. But I am too sincere to conceal from you that it will give me great pain. When in my last letter I affectionately thanked you for the present fortunate arrangement of our various interviews, I did not imagine that they would be interrupted by any temporary occasions other than those which might arise from a real impossibility of keeping to them, especially such as were caused by illness. But if we allow the inexhaustible instigations of work to be added to these unavoidable disturbances, the real regularity of our sacred intercourse will seem to me to be very seriously imperilled. I also, my beloved, have my own precious work, besides my heavy daily employment ; yet, in spite of this twofold and continuous duty I scrupulously devote two days of every week to meetings that my heart feels necessary. If they have as great a value for you as for me, you will hesitate before interfering with this friendly custom, unless on some necessary and exceptional occasion, which, I must acknowledge, does not seem to me to exist in the present case. As I have pointed out this, the principal reason for my regret, with affectionate openness, I hope, my Clotilde, that you will not doubt my sincerity when I show you that this interruption of your work twice weekly is a regular necessity for good health : the treatment you are at present undergoing might be seriously interfered with by too long-continued mental effort.

However, my dearest friend, whatever be my regret and concern, you alone must decide in this matter, after duly weighing the different opposing reasons ; for I cannot, I repeat, accept any meeting that would be burdensome to you. To prevent any

misunderstanding, I will not, then, expect you to-morrow, but only on Saturday, unless you feel within you a real wish to maintain our friendly arrangement even this week.

Always entirely yours

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 126. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 19 December, 1845 (10 o'clock)

I am too anxious about your health, my dearest friend, to wait until to-morrow for news about the leeching. As I am sending Sophie to enquire this morning, I beg you again to keep this excellent woman with you, if her services can be of any use to you through the unsuitableness of your porter's wife. I hope that my beloved will not be more ceremonious in this case than her relations were on a former occasion when a mere child was concerned.

When thinking of you last night I was afraid I had only too clearly perceived the painful private reason leading you to prefer leeches to being bled, without any medical reason; I very well understand your exceptional anxiety, caused still more by your sex than your position. As this medical alternative may not always be as optional as it is this time, I have thought of offering you my room in case of need; the size of my apartments would allow of my sleeping in another room without the slightest inconvenience to either of us. My character is, I hope, well enough known to you to permit you to accept this respectful proposal, so that you may conveniently receive the attention of my servant and the visits of our doctor. I think your family could not find fault with such a step, as they are not in the position to offer any alternative. Since you are willing to look upon me henceforward as a near relation, why will you not grant me the friendly privileges of one? I must, however, pay due respect to propriety; but without making my actions yield too much to it, so long as its real moral conditions are properly observed. This is why you alone, my noble and tender friend, can wisely decide in this case, after you have freely judged the various motives, provided you set aside all prejudice and all anxiety.

I felt directly after you had gone how disagreeable you must have thought me at your last visit, which, although unusually short, must have seemed very long to you. But you know enough of the real reasons of this unusual constraint to extend a special indulgence to me for it. Nevertheless, I am filled with self-reproach for so ill performing my noble function of consoler, and for having almost increased your lowness of spirits, when I ought to have forgotten my own in trying to cheer you. It is one of my greatest faults that I cannot make myself agreeable unless I am myself first in a satisfied state of mind.

In my explanations, which were perhaps inopportune, or at least too pressing, I am afraid I was involuntarily wanting in clearness on the principal point. With regard to the special care the state of your feelings requires me to take in order to keep unimpaired the trust which is indispensable to our holy friendship, do not fear that I ever need to be reassured on the completeness of your sincerity or of your purity. I should have made a very poor use of many decisive opportunities of appreciating your admirable moral superiority, if I had the least doubt on this matter. It is only with regard to your constancy that my wish for friendly pledges was concerned, not in any fear of any feminine imperfection which would be foreign to your eminent nature, but only through the persuasion I have of the insufficiency of my own merit to keep to myself so valuable a preference. The strength of the affection which binds me to you is such that I must almost wish for your heart to remain always free, since I can hardly hope ever to occupy it sufficiently. But I have so much confidence in your rare integrity that if, unhappily for me, love should one day take possession of you, I should depend upon your venturing loyally to inform me of it. I wished only to point out to you on Wednesday that, in the unavoidable absence of the best natural pledge, your thoughtful affection would be obliged specially to guard me from painful uncertainty as to the unchangeableness of the affection which has become indispensable to my whole being. I may, however, add here, that, having been lately led, in order to calm my heart, to read over again your last twelve letters, this beneficent reading has made me feel more strongly than I did before how tender and pure as well as wise and loyal you have been in the whole of your conduct towards me. Believe me, my Clotilde, that the reserve which has sometimes given pain to my passion now seems

necessary, so long as the present state of your heart continues, to save us both from irreparable regret ; and I now thank you on my knees for having spared me this by your affectionate prudence, the object of which I hope I shall never again misunderstand.

Farewell, honoured arbiter of my heart. However highly I value my visit to you to-morrow, what has just passed must not prevent your putting me off in a friendly way, if your health makes you fear more trouble than satisfaction from it.

Everlasting love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

The poor quality of the music attempted this week only too well explains the strange state of things about which you spoke to me on Saturday. In case then your health should allow you to take your father there to-morrow, I will, in any case, bring the libretto and the tickets. Your refusal or acceptance can besides affect no one here, because, notwithstanding our intimacy, I scarcely venture to let you hear such a platitude, very inferior, as I had been informed, even to the *Assyrienne*. My two stalls being empty would afford a proper protest against such a performance, though perhaps it would not be sufficiently understood.

Letter 127. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 25 December, 1845

MY AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

I assure you, upon my conscience, that I will not put on one of your gloves until the spring. Since you have been good enough to tell me you owe them to me, allow me to keep the debt owing until May. You have rendered me important services, which have done me good, though perhaps, unfortunately, rather at your own expense. I had better hopes of my circumstances when I accepted them. I pray you then earnestly not to go even to the smallest expense for luxuries for me. Money may be so useful that we owe it some consideration before parting with it. You know I hold you for a devoted friend : let me then sometimes treat you as an intimate one. I have all that is necessary for

this winter : if good health helps me my fate will be improved ; and you will be able to please yourself by saying, ' I have been of some help there.'

A pleasant chat on Saturday at the fireside.

I tenderly embrace you

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 128. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday, 26 *December*, 1845 (noon)

I am very glad, my dearest Clotilde, that I spoke of gloves to you the day before yesterday, as it has been the cause of your breaking a silence that was beginning to be painful to me. The number and regularity of our happy meetings must for the future of course, lessen the usual activity of our dear correspondence. But I have in vain foreseen this natural reaction of a desirable improvement in our relationship ; I have not been able to experience this interruption in our correspondence, the longest that had existed during a course of four months, without feeling keenly in my heart the need of this kind of intercourse, that even the most unrestrained conversation is far from rendering useless. Whatever be my happiness in looking at you as I listen to you, a constant continuance of this could alone make me forget the pleasure of reading your letters and writing to you.

Although the scruples which inspired your affectionate and special remonstrance do not appear to me valid, I respect them too much not to conform myself to them. We will then leave the payment of this little debt till the spring, as you wish it, in spite of my desire to avail myself of a happy annual custom by fulfilling this friendly duty to-day. Let me only, on this occasion, again put your thoughtful anxiety at rest as to the very small services you have honoured me in accepting up to this time. My temporary difficulties can never become so great as to render such an intervention at all a burden to me, and I hope that, according to your friendly promise, you will never hesitate to have recourse to it at need.

As the first year of our precious intimacy comes to an end, I cannot help reverting to a consideration of all the strong

impressions which will always mark it to me as the most memorable period of my private life. During its course there has arisen the only really pure and deep love that my destiny has allowed me. The eminent nature of the adored being has allowed my mature age, happier than my youth, to enjoy in all their fulness the most delicate emotions of human nature. By ensuring my personal happiness, this moral new birth tends also to perfect my social mission, which henceforward demands an increasing subordination of thought to feeling. My holy passion has besides enabled me to endure, almost without noticing it, a temporary persecution, and even a serious disappointment in friendship. By freeing me from material embarrassments, the new year will allow me still better to enjoy the unexpected happiness I owe to you. The calm resignation prescribed to me by the present state of your heart will soon rid me of the inevitable physical trouble resulting from the shock I underwent at the beginning ; my affection will learn how to enjoy the present most fully, without craving beforehand for modifications, which specially demand complete spontaneity.

As to you, my tender friend, allow me to congratulate myself that the year, which has seen our chaste intimacy arise, has also seen the beginning of your return towards health and your reconciliation with life.

The new year must necessarily consolidate and complete this twofold progress. It seems about to witness, after so many exceptional sufferings, the beginning of your modest independence and your well-earned fame, by means of the natural progress of the noble work in which you have so happily carried out the idea of making your own suffering serve the general well-being. You will at last honourably escape from a despotism founded upon affection, without exposing your literary career to a still more oppressive tyranny, of a kind whose inspirations are almost always of an unworthy nature. By repelling an odious attempt, you nobly resisted the vulgar temptation of a wide-spread and immediate, though ephemeral, publicity. Journalism will then find you more and more determined to refuse it any undesirable concession whatever. Although its disastrous ascendancy still continues very great, it is visibly undergoing a rapid decline, the inevitable consequence of its immoral conduct. Without refusing the assistance it offers, so long as that assistance continues honourable, yours will not be the first name, even a woman's, which has

been able, at need, to make its way independently of such a support.

Accept, my Clotilde, with affectionate indulgence, this friendly recapitulation of all my thanks, my hopes, and my wishes. We shall have then to-morrow our undisturbed conversation in the sanctuary.

Everlasting love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Do not be in a hurry to promise our stalls for to-morrow, for we may perhaps have *Il Barbier*, which I enjoyed yesterday.

Letter 129. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday evening, 26 December, 1845

MY DEAR FRIEND

If you have a *barber* to-morrow, I must ask you to keep him for some lady less asthmatic than I am. At the best I am but a shaky structure, and cannot yet be anything else: time must assist both the doctor and the patient a little.

I have had a great deal of bronchial irritation these last few days, and I think I would decide upon having a blister applied if Monsieur Grandchamp could promise me a good result from it.

I must now scold you a little for your persistence in coming back to the trifling incident I mentioned to you. In Monsieur M——'s place, many men would have done what he has or worse. He laid only visible snares for me, and I do not think him inclined either to revenge himself or to annoy me because I was not to be beguiled. He is a man of no solidity, and I should rely upon him only so far as I can be useful to him as a writer. But, in the main I only concern myself with doing well what I do at all.

I very much regret having been so hasty in availing myself of the permission you gave me some time ago to publish the *Saint-Clotilde*. It is just that which may have made him think either that you were putting yourself in between me and him, or that you were more to me than I had given him to believe. I do not know the real reason of his coldness towards you, but I can hardly think that it has in any way been caused by me. I request you then, my dear friend, to allow me

to consider this opening as a possible resource. It would be very pleasant to me to make my first appearance in this way, and I am quite able to guard myself against any weakness of will on occasions when strength is required of it. It is always with men that I have had close friendships ; so I know them better than I do women.

Good-night, my dear friend ; I hope you are stronger than I am. I am working well, however ; but my arm-chair and bed are my best soothing remedies : any walking must keep for summer as far as I can see : fortunately I have very good air here.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 130. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday afternoon, 28 *December*, 1845 (2 o'clock)

When you devoted to friendly remonstrance a letter that I could only read a few hours before my usual visit to you, no doubt you intended to convey to me, my dear Clotilde, a special desire to avoid all conversation on the subject. I flatter myself that I acted strictly according to this prudent intention, in which I was also assisted by our delightful and engrossing conversation. But this subject seems to me now to demand a written explanation, which I hope will spare us from having to return to it again. You know that I cannot do Monsieur Armand Marrast the honour of ever being jealous of him in anything, least of all with regard to one who is capable of appreciating us both. Nevertheless, without a full explanation you might think that his bad behaviour towards me, both past and recent, had resulted in inspiring me with a justifiable personal animosity, which might, albeit unconsciously, be likely to diminish my just appreciation of him.

I cannot, my dear friend, agree with you that his action, in the case you thought well to mention to me, is of so little importance. Although I had not before a very great esteem for Monsieur Marrast, especially from a moral point of view, I should not have supposed him capable of acting in this way. The long letter (of 22 July) in which I seriously discussed his absurd plan of

weekly collaboration, clearly shows that I was at that time far from suspecting such conduct, although even then his views seemed to me to be too interested. Putting yourself and me out of the question, this conduct seems to me to be shameful and even despicable. Relate it under assumed names, and you will see if any honourable and delicate-minded person judges it in any other way. Without having even the excuse of passion, and simply for the sake of a brutal pleasure, irrevocably to destroy by means of a shameful bargain the purity of a noble woman ; this is an attempt which, although it was suitably repulsed, does not the less deserve severe censure. As for myself, it will be henceforward impossible for me to show this despicable person the same consideration that I have done formerly : fortunately, as we do not seek one another's company, there is but little risk of our meeting in such a way as would show this inevitable change of tone.

No doubt, as you say, many others would have acted no better ; this is because profligate characters have become very common. But when one sets up for being a social reformer, ought one to act in this coarse manner ? Are those who thunder out every day against the abuses of the governing classes to be excused for making a still more immoral use of their own power ? Besides, you must allow me to believe that there fortunately exists a great number of men incapable of such mean acts ; I might even find them perhaps among our journalists, in spite of their special tendency to corruption. He has, you say, only laid open snares for you ! But even supposing he had not prepared any snares for you at all, would his scheme have been any the better, although openly carried out ? As a matter of fact, the only species of compulsion generally possible nowadays has been tried upon you, since our manners forbid material violence, of which, no doubt, these coarse characters would have made use in former times.

There remained to Monsieur Marrast but one honourable way to deserve pardon for this dishonourable attempt ; it was to grant you, of his own accord, when he saw the attempt fail, the important publicity which he had tried to make you purchase by unworthy means. His own honour, even in the absence of true delicacy, ought to have suggested to him this reparation, so as to avoid the eternal reproach of converting an act of literary editorship into a shameful bargain. This proceeding

was so evidently the proper course, that he could not have failed to take it for any other reason than because he had not finally abandoned his vicious schemes, and even his guilty hopes.

Our journalist sultans would like to have the licentious privilege of the theatre managers concerning any amiable *débutante*. It would then be little to be wondered at, if, in spite of your honourable refusal, this powerful journalist should have conceived the hope of at last overcoming you by means of a lure that he considers irresistible, especially in your position. His last advances seem to me to admit of no other explanation.

This is why, my dear friend, I have thought it right, once for all, to make a point of this special judgment, in which your perfect purity has led you to mingle too much indulgence. The noble office of protector that you have so affectionately given me, demands this strict watchfulness on the subject of an atmosphere so dangerous and so little known to you, into which you are about to venture. Without looking upon his support as indispensable, you know that I have always appreciated its real value for you, especially at the outset. But although it is your absolute determination never to encourage disgraceful approaches, it was perhaps necessary for you to have a more exact knowledge of the dangers of your position, which should lead you specially to practice an extreme reserve, so that you might not again have to regret any unguarded advances. The unhappy times in which we live constrain us often to walk in the mud without soiling ourselves. Although your eminent nature is specially fitted for fulfilling this difficult condition in the best way, the nature of the ground upon which you are entering ought, at all events, to be well known to you beforehand.

I hope, too, that you will not attribute to any personal feeling this fair warning given through my devotion to you. I must judge the case independently of my own feelings in the matter, but still I must not be like the magistrate who, for fear of being partial, always gave judgment against his own bias. It is enough for me that I am sure that my own tendencies have in this case in no way influenced my conscientious opinions.

They have not even changed my usual habit of thinking too well of anyone until experience forces me into necessary severity.

Yours always

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 131. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, 28 December, 1845

I am quite persuaded of the sincerity of your opinions, and the disinterestedness of the warning you give me, my dear friend. Only I think that if you knew better how the affair in question had happened, you would consider it more as I do. Monsieur M. came to me the first time to point out some alterations that were required in *Lucie*. That day he was perfectly reasonable and prudent in all his words. He seemed anxious to get me to work with him, and showed marked esteem for me. We ended by talking about my position, and he said very positively to me : ' I advise you very strongly to take life philosophically ; connections formed by one in your position will never be looked upon as wrong : it is only those without faith or law who would wish to cast stones at a woman because she does not condemn herself to civil death along with her husband.' I replied only lightly to him then. Afterwards he returned to the same subject : and finding me uncommunicative his curiosity began to be awakened ; at last he began to talk of boudoir morality. But I had already declared my sentiments before the offer of regular collaboration was made. I had made the mistake of seeming to take a keen pleasure in his wit ; and had allowed my own to go too freely. All this brought him out, and with a little adroitness in dealing with him I could have made the man very useful. If I cannot manage him in this way I am absolutely determined to drop the attempt.

Meanwhile, my dear friend, I have taken my poor body to Dr. Grandchamp to-day ; he really understands it very well, and I hope that he will end by getting me and my lungs out of trouble. He has lent me a little cupping apparatus that is worked by producing a vacuum. I applied it a little above my heart when I came in, and it has relieved me already. My trouble consists in local congestion, and I might have thought of this myself. Unfortunately I cannot perform the operation upon myself ; and it is such an effort to have to go to others for my treatment that this is perhaps the reason why the friction was of so little service to me. Now, however, since you have been so kind as to offer me Sophie so often, would you let her come twice a week and perform the operation for me ? She is so kind and such a sweet woman, that I would much rather trust my skin to her than to my porter's wife. This kind of cupping is probably less painful than the others ; but

still it is painful, and all my back has to be made red with it. I think the least inconvenient time for you would be at ten in the morning, my dear friend. If I am mistaken, you might choose another. If Sophie can come first to-morrow, she might come again on Thursday ; I suppose this ought to have enough effect upon a patient.

I am now starting for my Pavée evening, where I expect to hear about yours of yesterday. In spite of what you say, I must repeat how much I am touched by your kindness. I feel that no man loves me as you do ; I know the worth of your heart and mind, and when I am somewhat refractory under your care, it is my fixed idea of freedom which peeps out. You know whether this is excusable in me : I know that I go too far, and that if even my cat were to commit an act of despotism in my cell I should be capable of throwing him out of the window ; but I will correct myself when I have time. Here is a long manuscript : it is true that with your pens you would have got it into a sheet of note paper. So I will not blame myself for the time you will spend in reading it.

I tenderly embrace you

CLOTILDE

Letter 132. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday evening, 30 *December*, 1845

Your excellent reply, my dearest friend, deserves my affectionate thanks for several reasons. Besides the complete justice which you there render me in your explanation of a very delicate matter, you have also given me fresh proofs of your artless confidence, by relating some important details on the matter. Every new event that spontaneously gives occasion to the display of your eminent nature, always increases my heartfelt admiration of you. My lonely life has not prevented my knowing a good many women distinguished for their intellect ; amongst them I have even known a few in whom the head had not spoiled the heart ; but you alone have shown me the perfect purity and adorable candour which have caused the noble passion, at first aroused by so many amiable qualities, to take root so deeply. Even in cases where our agreement is incomplete, I soon perceive that it is mainly due to the excess of your rare good qualities.

This is what is happening to-day in regard to Monsieur Marrast. Your latest explanations only serve essentially to confirm the inevitable condemnation I passed the day before yesterday. They in no way lessen the gravity of the principal wrong, his attempt at a shameful bargain for the insertion of the *Saint-Clotilde*, followed later by a refusal to publish it when the disgraceful proposal was properly refused. Nothing can ever palliate, in my opinion, the infamy of such a proceeding. As to the useless offer he made you later of accepting your weekly contribution, if I had known then what I know now, I should not have honoured it with a serious examination ; for I look upon it now as having never been sincere ; it was never anything but a lure, only intended to draw you on unthinkingly. The whole of his conduct towards you reveals a very commonplace and even inferior moral nature, in which the absence of generosity has prevented even ordinary perspicacity. In the fear of risking the profits of his bargains he has failed to recognise the value of a proper gratitude. Yet I offered him in ' Saint-Clotilde ' a good opportunity of serving you worthily, and at the same time of acquiring special claims to my personal regard ! In the first burning moments of deep passion I did not hesitate, in order the better to serve you, freely to associate him with me by means of this important favour, in which your well-deserved gratitude would have been directed more to him than to myself. And yet I might then have feared the rivalry of an attractive intellect, the superficial character of which could not then have been known to you, while on the other hand you had not been able to appreciate me sufficiently. The fear of losing his bargain would not have blinded him to the advantages of this position if he had really been deserving of this noble rivalry, in which he manifested no real inclination, his lightness of character having, it seems to me, rendered him generally incapable of it. I cannot then modify the severe judgment that I have felt it right to express to you. If I am ever unfortunately obliged to write to him, which, however, I hope to be able to avoid, I could not continue to him my former mode of address : ' My dear Monsieur Marrast ' ; I could not go beyond the simple ' Monsieur,' the stiff business form. As for you, try to keep to the mere literary relations of the editor of a paper with a writer whose works he publishes. He should accept or refuse yours, like the rest, with a view only to his business, without any personal favour.

The past must warn you of the danger of any other connection with such a person, who, without being an absolute fop, will always count, where you are concerned, upon the seduction of his wit and the ascendancy of his position. It seems to me from the tone in which you conclude, that this is pretty nearly the resolution you had come to of yourself.

With what amiable frankness you deign at last, my Clotilde, to recognise the worth of my affection ! How grateful I am to you for always putting my heart before my intellect in your appreciation of me ! As to the defects of character that you acknowledge to me in so friendly a spirit, believe me, that even now, when I am suffering for them, I can refer them to their principal source. You, whose rights to independence have been always so little regarded, you are certainly to be excused for suspecting, so far as this is concerned, even the purest affection. I hope, however, that you now know me well enough to restrain this involuntary tendency in yourself so far as it is unjust or painful to me. Without asking anything from you beyond a sacred friendship, let me beg for greater ease and familiarity in our friendly interviews, when your manners are often as ceremonious as if a third person were present. In a word, let us be henceforward as free when we are together as apart. The general tone of our chaste intimacy must conform to the characteristic conclusion of your letter of the 10th, which it delights me to repeat : ' Whatever be our fate, I hope that death alone will break the bond founded upon my affection, my esteem, and my respect.' I embrace you then with tenderness, while expecting your dear Wednesday visit, which will bring our first year worthily to an end.

A^{te} COMTE

I thank you specially for having at last accepted the services of my good Sophie, with whom I hope you were pleased this morning. If the operation has to be repeated more than twice a week, I rely upon your not hesitating to employ her as often as you find necessary.

Letter 133. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday afternoon, 2 January, 1846

Here is some fine sunshine that will do me good. If it is the same to you, my dear friend, I will come and see you to-morrow instead of receiving you here. I did not think of saying this to

Sophie this morning, but I know that you do not regret the postage of my letters, and this will still reach you before mid-day.

New Year's Day and its weather kept me shut up yesterday at rue Pavée, so I shall bring you no news from outside. My news from within is good, and makes me hope that, as far as I am concerned, all civil war is at an end : it is so already. I think I shall not change my new ways when my brother arrives. I have gained a little strength this month through my interval of rest, and my time for work has come. *Wilhelmine* interests me more every day : she is the child of my sad solitude ; and I should take pleasure in developing her more if I had not better things in view. I hope very much to have finished before the month is out.

We meet to-morrow, my dear friend ; I know the time is about mid-day, I will arrange accordingly. I hope to pay my new year's calls in the course of next July. Humanity interests me very little at present. Do you, who are a great exception to it, receive the expression of my affectionate and devoted sentiments.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 134. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday, 4 January, 1846 (noon)

Your dear visit of yesterday was a real benefit, my beloved, and I am continuing its good effect by affectionately thanking you for it. I was unwell, both physically and morally ; our inspiring and friendly conversation has revived me in both ways, at least for some time. In proportion as our pure intimacy develops, I feel how precious you are to me. To what other friend could I have opened my mind to express at the same time my highest ideas and tenderest feelings, fully convinced that by her I should be always understood and appreciated ! Although I have not lived much in the world, I know it better than those who give themselves up to it, because, noticing everything that I see and retaining exact impressions of it, I have lost no opportunities that my life has offered me of observing in a useful way, that is, by connecting special facts with real general principles. My firm

conviction of your mental and moral superiority over other feminine types is then the result of real experience, which I have neither need nor wish to develop further. Yesterday, for instance, I spent a very pleasant evening with a kind and gracious lady, both simple-minded and intelligent, who might achieve great success in the world if she lived in it; but she has, at bottom, no really eminent characteristic either of heart or mind. So the only result of the conversation was to make me appreciate still more highly the inexpressible charm of the delightful meeting that had taken place before. Besides the natural sympathy between our two natures, I believe, my Clotilde, that this continuous inward satisfaction is the result of our retired life, for which I am delighted that your own disposition is as much inclined as mine. Frequent contact with society, even the best chosen, although the comparison tends to make us each feel better the value we have for the other, yet ultimately impairs all real intimacy, because it urges almost inevitably to a lightness of thought and inconstancy of affection. Such is at least its usual influence upon those who take pleasure in it for its own sake, without being obliged to do so from their position. Especially in these times of fluctuation and anarchical disagreement, you know with what difficulty and how seldom can a real conversation be held between more than two people, in the noisy solitude of our assemblies.

When I opened your letter yesterday morning, I should have liked to congratulate you upon your new seal, which could not certainly in any way better represent your principal characteristic. But as soon as I saw you, I left off thinking of any other flower. Speaking of flowers, no day has passed in the last month when I have not repeated with great pleasure your sweet verses; at the same time they remind me how you promised to gratify me with more of the same kind, and how that promise has not yet been fulfilled. Still, I have difficulty in believing that your excellent memory has become so barren in the midst of such treasures of past times. Have you not been keeping me some as a new year's present?

Farewell, my noble and tender friend; it is with regret that I am coming to the end of this friendly diversion, which is all the more precious that no outside necessity has given occasion for it. But I am leaving you only to employ myself with you in another way, giving up the remainder of my day's rest, until the

time of my quiet monthly dinner party, to duly reading over, as I had planned, all sixty-two of your letters of 1845, with the delightful hope that the present year will be no less favourable to me.

Love and respect everlasting

A^{te} COMTE

If, for any reason whatever, your mother should delay handing over to you what you wanted to ask her for last evening, I hope, Clotilde, that as soon as you need it, you will not hesitate to make use of the almost providential office that you have allowed me in a general way to fulfil towards you.

Letter 135. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, (10 o'clock) 4 January, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

It is rather I who ought to bless the circumstances which have brought us together. I have everything to gain from our mutual relations, and you will find in me only a very timid echo of your sentiments and ideas.

Yesterday's time together did me good as well as you; I like to be taught without being tired, and I always find that our talks do this for me.

Your kind letter reached me to-day, after I had had rather a disagreeable experience. I had written a line to my mother this morning to ask her to be so good as to let my new arrangements continue as they are. I told her that I would dine with the family on Sunday while Léon was staying there; and that even for my health I found that living so to say separately was good for me. I was surprised to see her come in showing herself hostile to my wishes; she spoke to me of her present difficulties, of the necessity of our largely reducing our expenses and of spending nothing except for our food. At last she gave me my fifty francs, but telling me that she could not do any more for me than what she, as well as my father, had given me as my new year's present, and that so I must wait for the money I should get for my writing. Nothing vexes me in all this because I know the general position. But still, it shows me that the old tendencies still continue, and also the importance of the services that you have rendered me, my dear friend. I shall have

to pay fifty francs for my quarter's rent, and that my mother never allows for. If she does not offer them to me, I shall ask you for them again, since you encourage me so affectionately. Out of my new year's gifts of forty francs, I have given eight to my porter's wife, six to my little nephew, and two to my postman. I have fortunately need of nothing for my own expenses, so I will be patient. My little book will be nearly four times as long as *Lucie*. I am depending upon it to clear up my position a little : I am very glad that I am feeling pretty strong at present.

Here, my dear friend, are the serious events of my life. They affect me very little in comparison with my daily feelings, and I think I shall end by becoming a philosopher in the retirement of my roosting-place. My mother's injustice to me is really only on the surface ; she feels bound to make me aware of the risks of freedom. This moved her to show me to-day that it is my present work that must establish it — this seems a rather grim joke. I always gain my principal object in our struggles, and I am very well pleased with the result of this one.

I should be very glad, my dear friend, if I could offer you some new *canzone*, as you kindly call my flower. But I can only find some scraps which are incorrect and unworthy of you. I destroyed all I told you of long ago, and I do not think there would have been much to select from them, except some rather pretty thoughts on Elisa Mercœur. I can only recollect the last lines :—

* Quoi ! l'avoir au jeune âge ! le sentir dans son cœur
Ce fardeau du génie qui vous mène au malheur !
Pourquoi ces tristes dons ? Ce sont crimes des dieux :
Mais j'adore et m'incline, Mercœur est dans les cieux.

Good-night, my kind friend ; it is striking ten ; I have spent this snowy evening with *Lucie* and with you. We shall meet to-morrow ; in the meantime accept my daily good wishes for your health and peace of mind.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

* What ! must young hearts be forced to undergo
That genius' burden, which conducts to woe !
'Tis the Gods' crime, whose fatal gifts are given ;
I worship and submit. Elisa lives in heaven.

Elisa Mercœur, the celebrated French authoress, died prematurely at the age of 26. Her tomb in Père la Chaise nearly adjoins that of Auguste Comte.—*Ed.*

Letter 136. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 6 January, 1846 (2 o'clock)

The new difficulties you tell me of, my dearest friend, seem more serious to me than to you. It is not on account of the immediate want of which you spoke to me ; for I shall be pleased to supply that to-morrow. But I am thinking of it more especially as of a general precedent that may be unfortunate in two ways, a precedent which it is important you should prevent, and that you can indeed avoid by firmness and tact.

In the first place your mother's last action tends to the establishment of a sort of domestic communism between you and your family, which could only turn in the end to your particular prejudice. The sum of money sent you every year by your uncle is intended for you alone, because of your exceptionally unfortunate position : it must not be gradually diverted to any other, even the most reasonable, purpose. Of course you cannot remain an indifferent spectator of the present narrow means of your brother and his wife, but your own right must be recognised first ; you may make suitable concessions yourself afterwards, but they must be acknowledged as allowed by you.

Until you fully attain this end by establishing direct relations with your uncle, you may appeal to your brother's sense of honour, as he must disapprove of this misappropriation of a gift intended for you. It is upon you, and not upon your mother, that any allowable diversion of it must depend. If driven to extremities you would be morally justified in calling for your father's protection in order to prevent the abuse of your mother's authority, as this would be sufficient to absolve you from the promise of secrecy you made to her.

In the second place you must be careful to prevent their reckoning too soon upon your being able to obtain a present livelihood from a literary income which does not as yet exist, and of which the approaching reality is far from certain. You have not reached the point where your mother may think herself freed from the need of affording you the assistance she has hitherto given you. Even when your present work is completed, its value from a pecuniary standpoint may be for some time hampered by serious obstacles, or at least by considerable delay. Its insertion in the *National* may give occasion to the renewal of disgraceful attempts, your right resistance to which may leave you no other course but completely breaking off the connection. Even putting aside the anticipation of anything wrong, the publishing of this work

in successive numbers, occurring as it does at the season of the idle chatter of parliament, with the addition now of electioneering intrigues, may undergo unintentional delays which will considerably postpone for some time the realisation of the profits. Only when this payment has been made to you by the paper or the publisher will your mother be reasonably justified in discharging herself from the need of paying you an equivalent portion of your material requirements. Until that time your separate allowance can admit of no diminution, since by this way of living the general expenses are in nowise increased.

We shall be able to discuss these two important points fully to-morrow, dear Clotilde, and my anxiety on the matter will already have specially invited your attention to them. You will make all the concessions to your family that present circumstances demand ; but they must be clear and voluntary on your part, after a fair insistence upon your permanent rights. If you do not look after this properly you will end by receiving hardly anything, while still remaining bound by seemingly personal obligations, even while they are putting to other uses the greater part of what is sent for you.

In the long visit that your brother paid me on Sunday, I was better pleased with him in several ways than I expected to be. Speaking to me of his difficult position, he seemed to me determined to undertake anything, even an industrial occupation, in order to get well out of it. I do not know, however, whether we must place much reliance upon the continuance of this unusual energy.

Farewell, my beloved ; Sophie has just comforted me a little about your health, telling me that she found you singing. I am delighted that you should be able to keep up your physical strength and moral energy in the midst of these new difficulties. But I am not at all surprised at it, for with superior natures such difficulties often result in inspiring by elevating them, as I have myself found more than once, when the heart is free from trouble. However this may be, your happy disposition increases still more my sympathetic adoration. Farewell, my Clotilde, until your pleasant visit to-morrow.

Yours ever

A^{te} COMTE

In spite of their incorrectness in metre, your noble and touching last lines upon Elisa Mercœur make me keenly regret not possessing the entire poem.

Letter 137. From CLOTILDE DE VACX

Thursday morning, 8 January, 1846

You have a chivalrous heart, my excellent philosopher ; and it was a piece of good fortune in the life of an unhappy woman to meet with a friend like you. I should be very rich if I were loved on all sides as you love me : peace would be voted me unanimously, instead of my being really alone in manufacturing it. You, who are always thanking me for the courage I have enabled you to find against annoyances, you are certainly the author of any that there is in me. I dedicate to you then, from the bottom of my heart, anything good and worthy of you, that it may be the means of my accomplishing.

I hope you will find some good ideas in my new work. I have thought of putting, as contrast to the eccentric mother, a model mother with a happy daughter ; it is but a sketch, yet it is nevertheless traced in outline. Perhaps I will give you my second part to read on Saturday ; I only have to copy it out.

Good day, my kind friend ; keep well, and rely upon my deep affection. I embrace you affectionately

CLOTILDE.

Just as I was going to send off my letter, I have opened it again, my dear friend, to ask you something I had already thought of before. Would you, who frame such good and eloquent thoughts, compose me the substance of a letter, appealing at once *to the philosophic sense and to the feeling, on the advantages and importance of the institution of the family and of marriage ?* It would be a piece that I should honour myself in owing to you, and it would bring out my character of Stéphane in his influence upon Wilhelmine. In a footnote I could inform the reader that this letter was addressed to the *author* by the *author* of the positive philosophy. I would ask you to give it as much as possible of the romantic form, that is to say, to make it as intelligible to indolent as to thinking readers, and to concentrate the ideas as much as possible. I am here asking you for a real present ; but you understand so well how to spoil your friends that you make them acquire a taste for it.

Stéphane has not seen Wilhelmine ; he struggles with her at a distance and seeks to gain warmth and enthusiasm from his own convictions. So it is quite a *positive* composition that I am asking from you.

Now, my dear friend, I must ask you not to inconvenience yourself in the least to do me this pleasure ; I must besides insist upon your refusing me, if there is the smallest reason why you should do so. I am giving you all my confidence, and I shall joyfully receive any proofs of yours.

I embrace you once more.

Letter 138. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday, 9 January, 1846 (noon)

The charming letter you wrote me yesterday, my dearest Clotilde, was most pleasant in several ways. Without mentioning your health, it assures me of its improvement by the tone of natural security and active confidence it maintains throughout, a tone incompatible with internal bodily ailment. It brought me, too, an assurance of the firm establishment of our holy affection, since you feel as much as I do its salutary personal effects. Such an intimacy, when completely established and deeply rooted, certainly constitutes the most powerful and continuous resource against all the troubles ordinarily met with in life ; our own very sufficient experiences convince us both as to this, and so we are the better disposed to develop in a right direction the mutual advantages of our friendly association. We shall, I hope, long continue to bless the year which has just ended, for having seen the beginning of our deep natural sympathy, to develop which there was only wanting a suitable opportunity for meeting. Lastly, I am glad to hear, in this excellent letter, of the continuous advance of the noble composition upon which I congratulated you as soon as you had planned it, as being a means of imparting a high character to the whole of your fine literary career.

I am much touched by the honourable request you have made me on this occasion, as it confirms your noble resolution of consecrating your talents to a wise and energetic defence of true social principles against the now inevitable invasion of common place and anarchical utopias. You know, my beloved, that it would be impossible for me to refuse you the first really important assistance you have so far asked of me. If I were only considering your own capability in this matter, I should limit myself to

recommending your careful reading of what my great work contains upon this interesting subject, especially in the last chapter but one of the fourth volume; the happy talent you possess as a woman would certainly draw sufficient conclusions from these fundamental inspirations. But I shall give myself a keen and heartfelt pleasure, in the midst of my present occupations, in writing for you myself, for your own use, this special little work, which consists really, for me, in a summary forecast of an important chapter of the second volume of my new work. Since I am, in your opinion, a true knight, ought I not to consider myself fortunate that my lady commands me to perform some special feat? I only fear not having time enough to accomplish it as soon as I could wish, although I hope not to delay your work. However great my efforts to come near the form you would prefer it to take, I feel that the want of flexibility inherent in my way of writing will prevent my being able to guarantee you from a sort of secondary remodelling of it, which, however, will be easy to you, so as to make the tone of this piece in harmony with the rest of your work. As to what concerns a mention of the author, I shall leave you full liberty to act on the decision that you judge most favourable to your success. I should be delighted that the present I am making you on this occasion should be entirely your own, and remain a secret between our two hearts; but if you think that my name can assist your eminent *début*, I should be just as pleased to procure you this satisfaction. At whatever time our pure friendship comes to be known to the public, I am convinced beforehand that it will soon be considered equally honourable for both of us.

Adieu then, my loving and noble Clotilde; to-morrow I must look forward to our holy kiss, but the sacred outpouring of our closest sympathy is always with us.

Love and respect

ALF. COMTE

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Letter 130. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday evening, 9 January, 1846

I accept the *present*, my dear friend, and with affectionate gratitude. But then you must only take the trouble to sketch

out for me what are the soundest doctrines on this great subject. I should perhaps be awkward at extracting them from a work intended for learned men ; and, as you have the whole month for writing this piece, I shall venture to accept the work. I will bring it to the level of the rest in form ; this will perhaps save me from the epithet of *pedant*, with which a woman is so easily complimented.

I thank you for your care of every kind. My health is really better, although I cough a great deal too much ; but I no longer suffer from spitting of blood or from palpitations : this is a step in the right direction. As to my days, they pass quicker, probably, than do those of most duchesses : we must not, then, ask too much of the gods.

The good Sophie has given me very satisfactory news of your health ; her attachment does you honour, but certainly does not surprise me. We shall meet to-morrow, my dear philosopher. I have not copied anything for you, because to do this I am waiting for three or four days, during which I shall not be composing. I am becoming very much in love with the prospect of my return to health, because I feel that strength would be very valuable to me. Goodnight, my dear friend. May all my wishes be realised in proportion to their fervency ; especially those which have your happiness in view !

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 140 From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday evening, 11 *January*, 1846 (11 o'clock)

You will be little surprised, my beloved, that our delightful farewells yesterday so increased my zeal as to enable me to accomplish to-day the sweet task I had at first reserved for another week. Prevented by an attack of colic, of short duration, from going to the opera, I had the happy thought to let good M. Lenoir occupy my two stalls, and was in bed before the overture began. Although I slept very little, I was able while in bed

to sketch out the honourable task you had laid upon me, and I have just finished it under the influence of an energetic impulse, which continued for more than ten hours. Do not fear the consequences, my dear friend ; you see I still have strength and time enough left to thank you affectionately, and in this way I shall have doubtless a better night. It is a very long time since I accomplished so severe a piece of work, and I shall not be sorry to have tried how much I am still capable of doing. All of this is due to your inspiration, my heavenly Clotilde, the subject, the zeal, and even the energy. I worked without ever losing sight of you, my eyes fixed on the '*heart's gift*.' Love alone, and a noble love, could make one pass such a day, when one is directly serving Humanity while satisfying the most cherished private affection. Only by carrying my thoughts back to the happy morning when the same sentiment inspired the *Saint-Clotilde*, can I recollect so delightful an activity of mind. If the merit was then that of spontaneity, to-day it is that of obedience, which, although of quite another nature, is certainly not less to be prized in love. Then, I hoped to surprise you pleasantly ; now, I have the certainty of serving you honourably : which is to be preferred ? In extent, importance, and difficulty, the present work certainly has the advantage, although I have kept to the question of marriage. As to the intrinsic merit, *the time it took has nothing to do with it*, as Alceste says ; but it has a great influence on the spirit in which its execution is effected. I am then quite proud of having finished this sketch for you in one day : I have only to write it out again, and, notwithstanding my daily labours, you shall take it with you on Wednesday.* My immediate reward consists in not going to bed to-night without duly thanking you for having thus begun the year for me, and for having allowed me to make so good a use of my last free Sunday. The increase of energy brought on by this affectionate enthusiasm for work will, besides, turn to the immediate advantage of my own present composition. Such is, generally, the precious influence of every well-placed inclination. Do not then be surprised, my tender friend, that the whole course of this happy day tends specially to strengthen the love and respect of

Your devoted philosopher

A^{te} COMTE

* Image of 14 January, 1846.—Ed.

PHILOSOPHICAL LETTER ON MARRIAGE

Composed for Madame Clotilde de Vaux, at her request, by the
author of the *System of Positive Politics*

MADAME

I promised you, my noble friend, a summary indication of the body of sound philosophical notions regarding the fundamental importance of marriage and of the family. A justifiable impatience leads me to accomplish this pleasant task more promptly than I had hoped, in order to hasten the time when my own too systematic conceptions shall receive from your pen the grace and the warmth which alone can bring them home to all minds by making them dear to all hearts.

As the new social philosophy is especially distinguished by its persistently historical character, I think it necessary first of all to draw your attention to the true general filiation of existing opinions on this great subject. This introductory appreciation will save us some lengthy discussions and barren declamations. It cannot be satisfactorily accomplished unless I connect it, however rapidly, with the true fundamental theory of the whole of the human evolution, intellectual as well as social.

There exist but three modes of philosophising on any subject whatever: first, the theological method, resting frankly on fictions which admit of no proof; secondly, the metaphysical, proceeding on the basis of personified abstractions; thirdly, the positive, which rests directly on an exact appreciation of facts. With the individual and with the species the first method is alone suitable to the infancy of the human mind, and the last to its full maturity; the second, powerless to organise, is only calculated to prepare our mental emancipation by facilitating the transition from the one stage to the other. The ordinary general division of historical periods presents a sort of empirical anticipation of this inevitable progression, for the spirit of antiquity was eminently theological, and that of the middle ages essentially metaphysical, while the spirit of modern times is principally positive, as its first efforts have, for the last five centuries, manifested more and more clearly.

All human speculations, the simplest not excepted, have first arisen under theological inspiration, in order finally to attain positive demonstration, after having passed through the stage of

metaphysical discussion. But this common mode of progress has of necessity been more or less rapid according to the increasing complication of the various objects of contemplation. Social doctrines must, therefore, be the very last to undergo this fundamental transformation, and its extension to this highest domain is the only possible issue intellectually of the immense revolution actually taking place, under French initiative, throughout the whole of modern Europe.

In the last century the metaphysical spirit secured for ever the preliminary emancipation of the human reason by divesting the theological spirit of the authority it still exerted over the principal moral and political ideas. This wholesome preliminary shock was as indispensable in the interest of order as in that of progress, because the religious influence so long necessary to both had, since the close of the middle ages, become at once oppressive and weak. Still, great as was this temporary service, now sufficiently accomplished, it should not in the present day blind men to the purely negative character of the metaphysical philosophy, which had its natural triumph in the 18th Century, and the influence of which, though radically undermined, still directs the greater number of active minds. When it has reached a state of speculative doubt on all points its exclusively critical genius must always lead to social anarchy, inasmuch as it discredits old maxims without being able to establish new. The positive systemisation coming after this necessary work of clearance, will ere long build up again the whole body of social ideas on bases not to be shaken, and wholly out of range of the theological system. Still, during this fatal interregnum, our feeble reason is inevitably exposed to the most dangerous fluctuations, first in theory, then in practice, with regard to all the fundamental rules of social existence.

A characteristic sophism, containing in it the germ of all future aberrations, led revolutionary metaphysics, in the person of its most eloquent organ, to a radical condemnation of all society. This he effected by his chimerical but widely-accepted hypothesis of a previously-existing state of nature, which had, by means of a supposed original contract, gradually degenerated into social existence. Such was the dangerous conception which could alone infuse into the vanguard of Humanity the energy of action and even of thought required to shake off the oppressive yoke of an effete organisation, as a prelude to a total regeneration. Still, such retrograde conceptions were a tacit avowal of the

powerlessness of the metaphysical spirit ever to take the lead in social matters, always antipathetic to its essentially individualist character. Its critical tendency had for too long a time, and still has, a real political use as applied to the old system. But wherever this political application has been sufficiently developed to demonstrate the need of a new system, the negative spirit, thus deprived of its principal destination, is, by its absolute nature, thrown back upon a moral activity of great and ever increasing mischievousness. This it exerts blindly against the elementary bases of human sociability, constituting a direct obstacle to the final regeneration by its general opposition to every real system whatever. The consequent outbreak of anarchical utopias, confined at first to the political order properly so called, has now reached the universal three-fold basis of all social existence, property, the family, and marriage.

All endeavours to stem these ravages of metaphysical anarchy by vehement efforts to reawaken that religious spirit which, by the retrograde character of its later manifestations, has alone given colour to such abuses of reason, are hopeless. Such blind efforts only perpetuate and increase the evil, by exciting apprehensions calculated to prolong the transitory office of the critical spirit, instead of leaving it to its own actual insignificance when absolutely devoid of any important sphere for its application. The evident failure of theological beliefs to preserve their ancient supremacy, intellectually, is a sufficient proof of their radical incompetence to give any real support to the social ideas still left under their dangerous protection. Far from being a support, this connection is in the present day positively compromising to all sound moral maxims, as well as to all true political principles, as causing them to be involved in the growing discredit attaching to an order of ideas long since become incompatible with our mental development. All the elementary ideas on marriage and the family are in such thorough harmony with the spontaneous tendencies of modern nations that for our contemporaries their single essential defect practically lies in the religious form which is still associated with their dogmatic presentation. It is then reserved exclusively for the positive spirit to furnish with support and development these fundamental maxims, which it alone can disentangle from the sophisms of metaphysics. The abuse of the faculty of reasoning can in no wise be checked by a philosophy hostile to the latest advances

of human reason, but only and solely by one which develops while it regulates it, and which by this very fact is alone able henceforth to put an end to the discussions which must inevitably arise.

Although the positive method was first applied to the simplest subjects, its domain has since been gradually extended to studies of increasingly greater complication. The direct systematisation of social ideas is indubitably its principal mission, and it is now able at once to enter upon it as the final result of its long previous exercise. Its incontestable superiority, intellectually, is the sure warrant of its full efficacy, morally. It alone can remove the fatal opposition which exists in modern society between the requirements of the heart and those of the intellect. By virtue of its characteristic reality the positive spirit will be pre eminently social, for the whole of our intellectual development is accomplished by society and for the good of society, whereas the theological spirit, essentially personal, could only become social indirectly as it were, as furnishing the priestly wisdom with the earliest, and a very valuable, sanction for the empirical results of universal experience.

Sound philosophy considers all active human intervention, in whatever direction, as in subordination to an invariable order the outcome, in every case, of the whole body of the laws which concern it. This natural order is only modifiable within certain fixed limits—limits which recede in proportion to the complexity of the events to be dealt with. But though from this point of view social phenomena admit of more numerous modifications than all the others, they are not the less equally subject to unalterable laws, only the discovery of these laws is more difficult. Our first object should always be to gain a sufficient knowledge of the spontaneous order of things, and then, by our systematic wisdom, to consolidate and perfect it as far as possible. An external basis of this kind is our only security against the errors and divergences to which our feeble reason is ever liable; and at the same time so worthy an aim conduces to our true dignity by assigning to our thoughtful activity a noble and vast destination—that of perfecting the whole of the universal order. So it is that human institutions are equally natural and artificial.

In matters which concern the family, and especially the foundation on which the family principally rests, viz., marriage, the respective parts of nature and of our own wisdom are easily

distinguished if we place ourselves at the right point of view. There can be no doubt that man, like many of the other animals, and even more strongly than they, is instinctively attracted to the marriage state, of which he always and everywhere presents to us the essential type, its principal characteristic being permanence of union. The systematic sanction of society comes in later, and only to secure more firmly the fulness and stability of this elementary tie, by putting an end to irresolution and guarding against inconstancy.

This twofold necessity is easily accounted for by a sound appreciation of human nature, from the point of view specially of the diversity of the sexes. Human nature is superior to every other form of animal life, by virtue principally of its characteristic combination of reason with sociability. Now, of these two elementary attributes, the first is more pronounced in man, the second in woman. Thence arises the natural pre-eminence of marriage over every other association, since both sexes are therein placed habitually in the attitude most favourable to their mutual improvement, which improvement consists, for each, in the better development, by marriage, of the qualities in which each is most deficient. Such is the noble destination of marriage, considered in itself and even quite independently of the propagation of the race, upon which its practical appreciation has been too exclusively based. That we may rightly conceive of this fundamental tendency of marriage, we must, summarily, state the positive analysis of every human existence.

Our life is composed of thoughts, of feelings or inclinations and of actions. In their vain disputes as to the pre-eminence of the life of speculation or the life of action, philosophers have practically left out of sight the life of affection, which, nevertheless, serves as habitual stimulus to the two others, and failing which both would soon exhaust themselves in fruitless efforts. From this point of view, Positivism gives a systematic consecration to the bright though indistinct future, foreseen by the social instinct of Catholicism, which, from behind the cloud of its mystical forms, really proclaimed universal love to be the true central motive of Humanity. The labours of speculation, and even the labours of action, though these last are far better adapted to the majority of men, occasion commonly, by their long persistence, an intolerable weariness. The benevolent affections, on the contrary, can alone remain at the highest pitch without ever

wearying their possessor ; and even the simple passing diminution of their force is always a subject of deep regret. Therefore it is that they constitute the principal basis of personal happiness, over and above their direct tendency to secure the general happiness by impelling each man to serve others, whether by his thought or by his action.

It is by virtue of its special development of the affective faculties that marriage stands first of all the ties of Humanity. When education properly so called has fitted each man for action and for thought, marriage completes this double elementary preparation by a noble exercise of the affection which should animate social life. In fact it is only between the two sexes, and that by virtue of their characteristic diversity, that such a perfect union can exist. Between persons of the same sex, friendship is almost always exposed to inevitable rivalries, which disturb its security even earlier than they destroy its disinterestedness. Rivalry can only entirely disappear between individuals of different sex, whose union leads, therefore, to the most precious agreement resulting from the natural tendency in the means respectively possessed by each towards their common end. What, indeed, is the conjugal relation but a true friendship strengthened and made more attractive by an incomparable mutual possession ? Thus the most energetic instinct of our physical nature, ceasing to hurry us into animal excitements, leads us on to the most perfect harmony, for the sacred intimacy of marriage utilises all the inherent though latent power of such an instinct to free us from our original egoism. If it were possible that such an admirable arrangement had never yet existed, the man who should set it forth before us as an utopia would certainly be regarded as the greatest benefactor of Humanity. Compared with this fundamental characteristic, the accessory or temporary disadvantages, and even the exceptional dangers, which, in our human imperfection, inevitably attend this just basis of internal happiness, individual or social, though really great, sink into insignificance. Although we must indubitably strive without ceasing to diminish, as far as possible, these secondary evils, it is only the narrowness of mind and licentiousness of heart, peculiar to periods of anarchical transaction, which could have led us so to exaggerate the special consideration of these evils, as to lose sight of the essential efficacy of so noble an institution.

Its complete spontaneity is evident to any one who is able judiciously to appreciate the very attacks which eccentricity, real or assumed, has again and again made upon it. Those who are most intolerant of such bonds most frequently end by bitterly regretting that they share them not. All intimacies really worth respect which are found outside this natural order, soon begin to present within their limits its principal characteristics, by constituting an affection both exclusive and indissoluble. When the human imagination has soared to the ideal conception of perfect happiness, it has considered this eternity of union as an essential attribute of its noblest utopias of a future life. The systematic inconstancy which in the present day so many superficial minds venture to advocate, could only result in radically degrading, in both sexes, the principal attributes of Humanity, by its opposition to all profound mutual moral aid.

Despite some unquestionable abuses of the social power, its solemn intervention is habitually indispensable to the full efficacy of this natural relation. Energetic organisations, who are alone capable of deep affections, may perhaps require this sanction only to complete their exquisite happiness by a noble publicity. But with the immense majority,—in whom all is ordinary, for good as well as for evil, the mind, the heart, and the character,—every private life, without this salutary check, would be wasted in capricious trials as disastrous as needless. This fatal tendency is in the present day perceptible in those countries in which protestantism has so acted on modern ways of thinking and acting as to make the possibility of divorce a reality. As to the disadvantages of indissolubility, they are usually compensated in the normal state by the very facts that make it necessary. For the capability of great modification is the spontaneous result of the native mediocrity which renders the preponderance of any one tendency impossible. And this capability can develop sufficiently only in the presence of an unalterable situation. No man ever chose his father or his son, yet both these relations admit of a perfect harmony. Although the conjugal relation cannot be as gradually and fully prepared, yet the free personal choice which distinguishes it tends to balance its inferiority of natural consistence, but only when the social consecration has raised an invincible barrier against individual caprice. Between two beings so diverse, is their whole life too long to know one another thoroughly and to love one another aright? Virginity previous to marriage, unbroken fidelity in marriage,

and final widowhood, will always be held in honour, even by and in the stronger sex.

And over and above this indissoluble sanction, society in general naturally reacts favourably on the elementary bond which serves as its basis, by assigning to each individual of the married pair a distinct office essentially in harmony, in all but very exceptional cases, with their respective natures. Whatever seditious clamours this fundamental division excites in our days, the positive study of man and of Humanity will more and more bring out this harmony, without which, indeed, the universal and constant prevalence of such an order of things would be incomprehensible. No serious man or woman would attempt to explain as a simple abuse of material power an order of things in which the weaker creature is so often to be seen obeyed and respected, in her very caprices, by so many vigorous agents. The life of affection being specially preponderant in woman, nothing is more reasonable than a social constitution which confides to her the principal permanent cultivation of that life, reserving to man all sustained efforts, whether of speculation or of action, which are commonly best suited to him. If the feminine nature is in general less capable of resolutions combining energy and perseverance, it becomes by that very fact more modifiable and more capable of adapting itself to any irrevocable situation. Uniformity of destination is also, in woman, in natural harmony with the much more limited variety of individual types she presents. A sound appreciation of our nature will result in a strong admiration for the instinctive sagacity of a fundamental harmony which, in each social action, commonly reserves to man the final decision, whilst attributing to woman the consultative or modifying influence. The only period at which the social intervention of woman was thus rightly constituted, under the influence of the chivalrous principle, clearly demonstrates the noble efficacy this apparent restriction admits of. If, by an impossible aberration, the two sexes should ever come to follow indifferently the same careers, we may rest assured that this fatal competition, far from being favourable to the development of women, would act as a complete check to it, by imposing on them struggles of too unequal a nature. A position, impartial but not indifferent, one favourable to observation but not stimulating to action, is certainly very favourable to the development, intellectual as well as moral, of the faculties peculiar to women in the daily onward march of Humanity.

Moreover, their consequent freedom from practical responsibility, and the fundamental right to live by the labour of man, constitute the inevitable compensations for this relative inertia, by completing the elementary rule of every human association, *e.g.*, that the spiritual power shall be supported by the temporal power.

Such is, in outline, the institution of marriage, considered in those points which are essentially common to all forms whatever of social life. A rational study of the principal variations to which the necessary evolution of Humanity has successively given rise, serves but to develop and confirm this elementary theory—though the ill-timed contemplation of them has hitherto, in the absence of a true historical doctrine, often led to very dangerous fluctuations of opinion, which still dispose unreflecting minds to regard the soundest social maxims as radically arbitrary.

Positivism naturally effects the reconciliation between order and progress so long and vainly striven for, by demonstrating not only that order is in all respects the first condition of progress, but that, from every social point of view, human improvement consists, above all, in the continuous and increasing development of that fundamental order which contains within it, from the very beginning, the natural germ of all possible improvement. And this fact, with regard to marriage, is clearly proved by the whole of the past.

If the direct object of this elementary union be to facilitate, in both sexes, the development in common of the faculties peculiar to each, then one may safely assert that the regular course of its variations has always worked towards its better adaptation to this great end. Very far from disposing the two human types to the vain equality dreamed of in our day, the course of civilisation necessarily brings out their principal differences, especially mental and moral differences, which are originally slight, as we may see in the lower ranks of society, among whom types in many respects of every earlier stage naturally survive.

In antiquity, as seen in Greece and Rome, the principal step in this direction was the substitution of monogamy for the primitive polygamy. Though a superficial observation has often led men to ascribe this difference to influences of climate, a fuller examination shows that it everywhere follows the degree of civilisation. In the north as in the south, we never fail to find polygamy when we travel far enough up the stream of the ages of society ; and

the south manifests no less clearly than the north the final tendency of our species to the purest monogamy, which will soon prevail among the more civilised of the Orientals. But great as was the importance of this first step in the Greek populations, and greater still in those depending on Rome, it was in large measure neutralised amongst them, either by the social insignificance of women in military nations, by the existence of domestic servitude, which practically led to a sort of polygamy, or again by the excessive privilege of repudiation reserved to men. And therefore marriage continued among the Greeks and Romans limited essentially to its physical destination, and those moral satisfactions which, to modern nations, constitute its great charm, were sought elsewhere, even by the most eminent natures.

It is to the admirable revolution accomplished in the middle ages under Catholicism that Humanity will always be indebted for the best outline of the true normal constitution of marriage as peculiar to our species. Among the ancients the constitution of the family rested entirely on the almost unlimited despotism of its head. Beyond the maintenance of this principle, the only interest of the state in the family was in those qualities possessed by its members which were calculated to be useful to it in war. Thanks to the initiation of Catholicism, Humanity began to feel the fundamental importance of domestic life, both as best fitted for the mass of men in industrial societies, and also as the best preparation for a completely social life. At the same time marriage took the leading position which belongs to it amongst the elementary bonds; this position was well brought out by the new custom which then began to prevail, that the wife should renounce her father's name in order to take that of her husband. As a first example of the radical independence in which morals stand with regard to politics, this great phase decided once for all that it is in the family that consists the true centre of human morality. Only a blind spirit of revolt can in the present day fail to recognise this immense step, and seek to return to that direct subordination of the individual to the state which prevailed in antiquity, and which would now be the very height of retrogression. During this catholic age, upon which protestant or deistic metaphysics would fasten the term 'dark,' the education of the affective life of our species made a greater step in advance than it had ever before been able to accomplish. The admirable institution of chivalry then manifested to the world, at least in the higher

classes, who afterwards served as a type for all, that the passion of love, hitherto so purely animal, had at last developed the noble nature which distinguishes it in man. Frequently rising to the most exquisite delicacy, it became, by its slightest encouragements, the stimulus and support of lives of active devotion, equally favourable to the moral and even physical improvement of both sexes. The true social condition of women, the just liberty of their private life, the material and moral rights inherent in their situation, and the wise restriction of the indispensable supremacy of men, all were then established as perfectly as was possible under the civilisation of the time, and with the peculiar nature of the unstable doctrine, then the imperfect organ at the disposal of priestly wisdom in its efforts to direct the spontaneous advance of the foremost populations.

In all these respects it will be the special work of Positivism, the natural successor, after the close of the metaphysical interregnum, of Catholicism, to carry out, in a more favourable environment, the final systematisation of human morals aimed at by the noble rule of life of the middle ages. This it must accomplish by building on a stable foundation, and perfecting by higher inspirations, that which the former system could only exhibit in faint outline and by the aid of temporary beliefs, which soon became hostile to the natural development of the intellect and of social life. It is in this change of principles that the sound philosophical reconstruction of the doctrine of marriage must now lie. And indeed the present institution requires no great special innovation, no change but those precious improvements which the general recasting of education and of habits of thought and conduct will naturally bring about. Since the close of the middle ages catholic ascendancy, even before its decay became evident, has lost its ancient prerogative of securing respect for the moral prescriptions which Humanity had established under its early direction. All it has been able to do has been to issue fruitless anathemas against the habitual licentiousness which was discrediting, more and more, and that publicly, all sound conjugal maxims, as yet unfortunately confounded with beliefs which were justly considered as obsolete. How, for instance, could a sincere respect for the true subordination of the sexes be maintained, in a time of indispensable emancipation from the old beliefs, when the official consecration of it rested solely on an absurd religious fiction as to the physical origin of woman?

The positive systematisation can alone defend these great notions, and all other truly social conceptions, equally from frivolous sarcasms as from anarchical sophisms. Though for the moment bereft of the sacred character with which Catholicism invested it, it is but provisionally that marriage has been, by the metaphysical reasoning of our lawyers, reduced to the vulgar level of an ordinary temporal contract. A true reorganisation will soon restore to it, more completely and more permanently, the august spiritual consecration which befits the first elementary bond of every human society. The same moral power which will preside over its constant celebrations, will also, as a natural consequence of the new convictions of the public, be invested with the power of remedying, as far as may be, its accessory or exceptional evils. Scarcely ever, except in secondary arrangements, will it be driven to invoke a temporal intervention, which, however indispensable its heterogeneous office may be until the establishment of the normal order of things, yet has a tendency to lower this sacred institution.

There is no need, my dear friend, for me to enter into more details in this brief summary. Your mind and heart will easily give it the requisite development as you adapt it to the noble composition upon which you are now engaged. And the third part of the philosophic letter I had the happiness of presenting to you on the occasion of St. Clotilde's Day, contained some direct allusions to the social future of your sex under the final ascendancy of Positivism, which it is therefore needless to reproduce here.

When I began the outline of the normal constitution of marriage, which I have just concluded, it was my intention to touch upon the whole constitution of the family, founded as it is on the conjugal bond, perpetuated by the filial ties, and extended by fraternal relations. But my principal subject has led me too far to allow of my proceeding, at any rate at present, to examine the two other constituents of this fundamental theory; and besides, they appear to me much less important for your work. Moreover, if you should desire any immediate explanations on these subjects, you might find it useful to consult the fiftieth chapter of my great work (*Philosophie Positive*, vol. IV). The special study of this chapter, which I have before urged on you, will, after the perusal of this letter, become far easier to you than your admirable modesty leads you to suppose. It is not to the learned that I principally addressed myself in that chapter, but to all sound

minds animated by honest hearts, and with no other philosophic preparation than that which is the natural result of the experience of life.

Adieu, my noble friend, I thank you solemnly from my heart, for having thus afforded me the sweet and special satisfaction of being of use to you personally, without interrupting the steady pursuit of my social mission.

A. COMTE

11 January, 1846

Letter 141. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday morning, 12 January, 1846

MY DEAR PHILOSOPHER

Sophie will bring you my thanks at once, whilst I wait until Wednesday to offer them to you personally. I am very much touched and quite overcome by the new proof you have given me of your devotion. I hope that you will get all the pleasure of it, and that I shall get the honour, which will certainly be double profit to you. While sincerely sorry for the trouble you have had, I cannot help secretly rejoicing in your courage, which has procured me so quickly a result well worthy of being waited for; I like to think that this little extra work has not tired you too much, and that I shall find you well on Wednesday. My sister-in-law sets out on that day, at two o'clock. If I go to the coach to see her off, perhaps I shall arrive a little late at your house, so here you have the reason beforehand.

We shall meet this evening, my excellent friend. I affectionately embrace you.

CLOTILDE

Letter 142. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday afternoon, 15 January, 1846

MY EXCELLENT PHILOSOPHER

I have just read with keen interest and great attention the remarkable composition of which you have been so kind as to make me a present. I can understand all the value that ideas can acquire when they are filiated, and I feel that the only masterly way of establishing them is by bringing them out, step

by step, from their basis. Unfortunately, WE ALL HAVE ONE FOOT STILL HANGING OVER THE THRESHOLD OF TRUTH* ; we watch the champions in the arena without caring to take part in the fight. Indeed, if we do set out towards the good side, we find that there are but small parts left for us, and valid reasons holding us back. That is where I am : I do not feel strong enough to leave my position of great doubt until I find myself better fitted out ; consequently all I can do is to draw my ideal of morality from my heart and edify it simply on feeling. After all that is about a woman's lot ; she will find it better to follow quietly in rear of the innovating column, even should she thereby lose some of her ardour for the fray.

I shall pass over in silence everything of a systematic nature, whether relative to what is exhausted or what is new ; and I shall still be able to make good use of what remains in this philosophical essay. I thank you then for it from the bottom of my heart, my dear friend, as I do for all the pleasures you give me so affectionately. If I were a man, you would have in me an enthusiastic disciple ; I offer you instead a sincere admirer.

Goodbye, until we meet again, my dear friend ; I am leaving you at the same time as the daylight ; it is striking five, and there is just enough of it in my tower to close a letter by, which is not bad for January.

I tenderly embrace you.

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 143. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday, 18 January, 1846 (noon)

Our pleasant intercourse of this week has not prevented me from feeling, my beloved, that although I have been so well occupied with you, I have not had the satisfaction of directly addressing you by letter during all this time ; so I am rejoicing at having to reply now to your charming letter of the day before yesterday, for which I have not yet been able to thank you properly.

Your scheme for making use of the little philosophic composition which so delightfully employed me last Sunday, fully realises all my hopes. I was obliged to write it in the systematic way

* The Sixth of the Seven Maxims of Clotilde de Vaux.—*Ed.*

to which I am accustomed, without which it would be difficult for me to accomplish anything satisfactory. But it is very natural and very fitting that you should set the form aside once for all, so as to occupy yourself with questions of feeling, for these alone are suited to your admirable talent. I hope that I may have furnished you with some useful indications upon this great subject. This was the whole of my project when, as a secret between our two hearts, I made you this affectionate present. I am happy in seeing it so judiciously appreciated by you in the degree perfectly suitable to your sex and purpose, as also to the present situation of minds and hearts.

On this precious occasion, we can both, I venture to say, my honoured friend, feel proud of an elevated and spontaneous co-operation in wisely working at the justification of a fundamental institution, by which we however, through a series of painful exceptions, have had to suffer so much in our own persons. If it were right for these personal circumstances to be made public, they would doubtless increase the general influence of our motives, by making it felt how real and deep must be the convictions which we uphold, contrary as they are to the direct impulses natural to our respective situations. You, my incomparable Clotilde, were at the same time more irreproachable and more unhappy than I, and yet you have so nobly taken the first step in this holy co-operation! Is it then possible that such a proof should not specially tend to strengthen my respectful attachment? Admitted to the near contemplation of such eminent and yet modest virtues, how could I not feel myself more and more touched, as well as honoured, by such an affection! Expression fails me to declare to you all my gratitude for a tenderness by which I feel myself urged more every day towards inward improvement as well as towards the sweetest contentment. Let new difficulties and struggles come upon me if they must; strength will never be wanting to me, for any purpose, so long as I can rely upon my invaluable friend. Even should I be deserted for the time being by everyone else, my chief pleasure would still be to devote myself to her.

I am now able, my dearest Clotilde, to thank you specially for the calm and yet delightful position which we have at last attained; it is certainly due to your affectionate prudence more than to anything else. Time passes swiftly over our holy intimacy, which is already beginning to rest upon a real past of its own;

and I feel with deep satisfaction that it is taking deeper root in proportion as it is becoming purified. Complete mutual confidence is now established, and I hope that it will not again be disturbed, since it is the result of a real appreciation of the present, without any unwise anticipation of the future. While I resign myself to the present condition of your heart, wanting though it be in completeness, I congratulate myself that at least you accept the entire possession of mine. I owe you profound gratitude too for your having allowed me to express, without any useless dissimulation, sentiments which have been till now unknown to me, and which will serve to console and embellish all the remainder of my life.

The fortunate incident which has inspired me with this special outpouring seems to me, my adorable friend, very suitable for spontaneously marking the solid character of our affection, which will be found, I hope, more and more bound up, for both of us, with our improvement as social beings. Very far from our respective work tending to separate us, it will become a powerful means of strengthening our friendly association through the habitual convergence of our opinions and our efforts. Thanks to the eminent nature of the being so dear to me, the defence of true social principles is for me transformed into a daily act of private adoration. Let me, my noble and tender Clotilde, bless, at your knees, this happy coincidence, by which I am led to love my work better, and at the same time to set a higher value upon my affection.

Love and respect everlasting

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 144. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Sunday evening, 18 January, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

I am freed from my pains : they ended in a profuse perspiration, by which I have rid myself of the cod-liver oil ; I wish it a good journey. When I went to bed yesterday, I thought I was falling into non-existence : to-day, here I am, I am glad to say, fairly set right again.

Whatever happens to me, good or ill, I am always thinking of you—in small and great matters—and I know that my telling you this does not trouble you.

My mother had yesterday the unexpected pleasure of hearing 'Pasquale,' and was very much pleased with it, in spite of her regret at having deprived Max of this little entertainment. I am glad that they too owe you something ; it is delightful to me that they should share in my gratitude.

We shall meet to-morrow, my dear friend. If it is the same to you and Sophie, may she come to-morrow instead of on Tuesday ? I shall perhaps come back by Monsieur Grandchamp's, and in this case will take him back his apparatus. I embrace you tenderly, as I love you.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE

Letter 145. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday, 19 January, 1846 (noon)

I have only time, my dearest friend, to express my regret that I received your welcome letter of yesterday too late to send Sophie to you to-day as you wished, which would, however, have been very easy, if we had known soon enough. She will come then to-morrow morning as usual. Do not think of returning our doctor's apparatus, and go on using it without fear of inconveniencing him.

I am glad that your mother was agreeably disappointed on Saturday evening at the opera. Your elder brother paid me a rather long visit yesterday, but said nothing about it then. However, his attitude towards me continues to improve.

Farewell, my dear Clotilde ; your trouble of Saturday has at last been removed ! We shall meet this evening *en famille*.

Yours always

A^{te} COMTE

I hope you received my letter yesterday evening soon after you sent off yours to me.

Letter 146. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 23 January, 1846

Good morning, my dear friend ; Sophie will bring you this greeting from me. I always return to my solitude filled with the goodness and nobility of your heart, as well as the happiness

I have had in acquiring you. I raise you above my daily troubles like a banner destined to overcome them—a true attachment is the finest emblem to display before the enemy.

I tenderly embrace you.

CIOTILDE

Letter 147. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 25 January, 1846 (10 o'clock).

Although the re-opening of my lectures must for the future very much interfere with the freedom of my Sundays, I hope, my dearest friend, that it will not entirely deprive me of the pleasure I have so often enjoyed during the last six months, of specially concerning myself with you on this day. I am pleased to prove this to you already by addressing these few friendly lines to you before going to my first lecture. Your noble ascendancy has firmly united the habitual development of my highest thoughts with that of my tenderest feelings. Do not then be surprised that I wish secretly to inaugurate this sixteenth annual course by a special remembrance of my beloved. I cannot see this day come round again without at the same time recollecting how much the whole of my life has, since last year's re-opening, been changed for the better by the noble affection which now inspires me. Besides, this short outpouring can but prepare me suitably for the office I am about to fulfil, by naturally disposing my soul more favourably for the exercise of this philosophical function.

The charming greeting to which I was unable to reply on Friday will leave me the permanent recollection of a characteristic expression of affection, for which I feel the need of thanking you specially, when you so kindly mention in it your good fortune in having *acquired* me. This, indeed, my Clotilde, is a word which is applicable to both of us, when each is describing their best possession. The more our intimacy is developed and strengthened, the better do I feel each day that this chaste union has become for me the principal condition of a happiness for which I had always ardently longed, but without ever having it in my power, alas! to experience, before I had passed under your beneficent rule.

How well I appreciated it yesterday, for instance, during those too swiftly passing hours of tender contemplation and unrestrained confidence, which bring me now every week into your august

solitude ! Although I have not yet adequately expressed my thanks to you directly for it, you know that I feel the full value of this incomparable favour. Each of our two free weekly interviews has its own charm. The day when I receive your visit, it seems to me that I at last begin to have a real home. But when I come to see you, it is yourself that I specially appreciate. The noble simplicity of your modest dwelling recalls to me more vividly both your exceptional misfortunes and the eminent qualities of your heart, as well as of your mind. All that surrounds me there specially tends to penetrate me more deeply with an affectionate admiration, with which a splendid residence would not impress me so strongly. This involuntary contrast between your situation and your merit makes me then better appreciate the amiable resignation which habitually disposes you to wait patiently for a better future, soon, I hope, to be brought about by your wisely persevering in your valuable composition.

Farewell, my noble and tender Clotilde ; depend always upon the respectful love which makes your dear philosopher feel as proud as he is happy.

A^{te} COMTE

Although I have slept very little, I am well enough in health to hope that my lecture will stimulate without fatiguing me, in spite of the deep emotion that long custom and firm convictions do not prevent me from feeling, when I make my annual re appearance before my audience. The act of worship that I have just shortly accomplished inspires me, I feel, with additional zeal and confidence for the fulfilment of the duty that is about to tear me from you.

Letter 148. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 27 January, 1846 (4 o'clock)

I have often thanked you, my dearest Clotilde, for the deep improvement that the whole of my moral existence has undergone, since I had the happiness to be attracted by you. The good effect of this noble sentiment upon my intellect was shown at the outset, in my affectionate composition at the time of your *fitte*. I afterwards felt its good effect upon my philosophy when, during the vacation, I began my second great work. Now, the

re-opening of my free lectures naturally brings with it a fresh manifestation of this happy influence, which will certainly greatly improve my oral activity as it did before the activity of my pen ; I say activity, for this, with a philosopher, consists specially in speaking or writing, as opposed to meditation. When I gave myself up, a fortnight ago, to the pleasure of composing the private present you had favoured me by asking for from me, you know that I foresaw it would have a valuable reaction upon my mind—I now feel, in fact, that this latest act of a respectful love has very much contributed to the strong emotion caused me to-day by a new and summary explanation of the fundamental spirit of my philosophy, the systematisation of which I had not before expressed so firmly and clearly in public. Reciprocally, as you are aware, my beloved, by sufficiently long experience, the development of my active life, together with that of my life of thought, has been brought to greater perfection by my fortunate affection for you, and this development, far from tending to deaden my affection, really ends only in rendering it purer and deeper. The affectionate letter that I wrote to you on Sunday, at the moment of going to the re-opening of my lectures and to which you have as yet not replied, is enough to let you know that the action of speaking will not lead me away from you any more than the action of writing. On the contrary, the more this two-fold activity is developed in me, the more do I feel myself disposed to cherish you. Do not be surprised at it, my dear friend, for the very nature of my great and constant aim, always leading me as it does to large thoughts, must tend to strengthen all loving feelings in me.

That I have been so slow in feeling the inward benefit of this spontaneous harmony is due to the fact that my heart, although deeply disposed to tenderness, had, alas ! by a fatality only too easily explained, always up to this time been wanting in an object worthy of its adoration. For such a mutual influence could not be realised, at least in any way likely to last, save by a really highly-placed love, and one able always to stand the test of experience. As has been proved the case in the chaste passion I have the happiness to experience, the whole daily course of events and thoughts must naturally tend to show in every way to greater advantage the excellence of the adored being.

I shall always, as a philosopher, owe to this noble love that I am able properly to feel the necessary preponderance of

the affective life, which up to this time I had not perceived sufficiently clearly, whilst I had bestowed an undue attention on the active life or on that of contemplation. I had fully established in my fundamental work that neither thought nor action could constitute the essential centre of human life, which must always be referred to the affections; but it was necessary that this rational conviction should be strengthened and animated by deep personal feeling, without which it could not acquire a sufficiently constant ascendancy. Such is the important service that the whole of my development will always owe to your adorable influence, my Clotilde, and this will also very much contribute to making the second part of my philosophic career superior to the first, if not as to the purity and originality of the conceptions, yet in the fulness and energy of their final systematisation. Our most important progress consists in improving the unity of our nature, both individual and collective, by establishing a more complete harmony among all its tendencies or impulses, however various and even mutually opposed they may be. Now this improvement must specially result from a more complete preponderance in our own nature of the feeling which best tends towards general unity.

I know, my beloved, that you are, as time goes on, being freed from the commonplace prejudices which continue to accuse systematic positivism of dryness and coldness. These reproaches, not without foundation so long as positive conceptions remained partial and incoherent, and were limited to material phenomena, naturally disappear now that these conceptions are completed and co-ordinated by being made to include moral and social ideas. It is not for the sake of continuing towards you a justification, now fortunately unnecessary, that I have allowed myself to be drawn into this rapid philosophical effusion. I have only had the natural desire to express to you the special gratitude with which I have been inspired by a fresh opportunity of deeply feeling your precious influence upon my progress towards perfection.

Now, my Clotilde, you know that in religious rites, the hymn of thanksgiving is almost always followed by a solicitation of some other favour. You will not then be surprised to see me end this friendly letter of thanks with a humble request. It is that you should for the future make a regular habit of the gracious favour you have spontaneously done me these last two weeks,* by

* Image of 14 January, 1846.—Ed.

always dining with me on your pleasant Wednesday visit. Experience must have removed any really reasonable scruple in this matter by showing you that I treat you with a simplicity not only friendly, but almost conjugal ; for I have never invited even one of my most intimate friends by himself without adding something to the meal prepared for me. By promising you to continue this economical sign of friendship, I hope to remove beforehand any reason for your refusal of this sweet weekly pleasure.

Farewell, my dearest Clotilde ; I embrace you as I adore you, with respect and fervour. We shall meet to-morrow.

A^{te}. COMTE

The precautions I took yesterday as regards my health have so far succeeded that I feel safe against any further consequences from the disturbance of the evening before.

Letter 149. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday evening, 27 January, 1846

MY EXCELLENT FRIEND

Allow me to refuse, by letter, the tempting invitation you have given me. I shall have the greatest pleasure, as I have shown you, in joining you now and then ; but I really cannot now turn this pleasure into a constant habit ; you must have seen that I am not a slave to the ordinary rules of propriety, and shall never sacrifice higher feelings to them ; but, really, a woman who goes off to dine at a man's house is trying her strength of mind a little too much. It would be quite another matter if I had a house of my own at which to receive you. You will understand this, I am sure.

I was very grateful for your Sunday's remembrance, and three or four times I had the greatest wish to go and hear you ; but my heart so shrinks from the heat, the crowd, and the walking, that I must still leave it to its life of insignificances. However, I gather the fruits of my patience and my efforts in proportion as I practise them. I can stand my small dose of work, and only have fits of discomfort ; I now hope that I shall at last rid myself of them.

Good-night, my dear philosopher: I am very glad to be reassured about your health; take good care of it and rely upon the sincere interest I feel in it.

I embrace you affectionately

CLOTILDE

Letter 150. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Wednesday evening, 28 January, 1846

I wish to make up to you at once for my want of amiability to-day, my dear friend. I ought certainly to have put as much grace into my refusal as you did into your affectionate offer; forgive me then, for the sake of—I hardly know what—it shall be, if you like, for the sake of the best of philosophies. You see very well that I have some faults, even on the outside! My wrong-doings only make me feel that my heart is right, and that it is incapable of voluntarily causing, to you especially, the least pain.

Good-night, my kind friend; this will bring you my greeting for to-morrow morning; love me with indulgence.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE

It is agreed that I ask for your dinner and company every now and then, with full freedom of heart and speech.

Letter 151. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 29 January, 1846 (3 o'clock)

Your pleasant good evening, or rather good morning, has come just at the right time, my beloved, to cure a fit of melancholy, for which yesterday's refusal was in part responsible, as it accentuated still more the bitterness of my isolation. Most certain it is that I should not have made the proposal I did had it seemed to me really contrary to any rule of propriety which deserves to be respected. In the simplicity of my heart, I must confess to you that even now I hardly understand how this acceptance of a regular invitation should pass the bounds of the

allowable intimacy permitted by the very exceptional position in which we both are placed. Nevertheless, in such cases I will always submit my opinion to yours with perfect deference, not only because it concerns you principally, but above all because of the superiority, both general and special, of your womanly tact. I have willingly allowed that the guidance of our mutual relations should be for you, and I have been too happy until now under your loving direction ever to blame it seriously, even when it opposed my own opinion. I shall leave it to you to decide each time as to whether you can stay till evening when you pay your precious weekly visits, and I shall long in secret for it to be as often as possible, feeling sure of your own regret when you have to do otherwise.

This tender and temporary dispute will leave me only the lasting memory of the exquisite frankness which urges you to admit in this friendly way your slightest shortcomings. There is not only great merit, but keen happiness in the sincere confession of even the smallest fault. The Catholic system never better understood our deepest moral needs, albeit empirically, than when it regulated in its own way the habits of confession and repentance, habits which are so effectual in the radical improvement of human feeling. How often have I been pleased with myself for having openly acknowledged my faults or my mistakes even before correcting them! You make me respect and worship you even more by asking for my forbearance for so small and passing a fault. Ah! how sweet it is, my Clotilde, as I was pointing out to you the day before yesterday, to love a being towards whom one is spontaneously and constantly drawn, by careful observation of every little daily act, as well as of the most important events. Those must especially feel the value of such happiness who have previously misplaced their affections. And yet, after having at last found a worthy object of worship, how painful it is to be unable to realise this holy union!

I soon got rid of the calls of society upon me last night. All the unusual tumult only made me recall your taste for dancing in the abstract, and, in the whirl of white or pink dresses, it was not long before I saw you only, even without shutting my eyes. When the crowd had reached a point when I could no longer continue my tender thoughts I went away in silence, and I was in bed by eleven o'clock, having nothing to regret except the three francs worth of cab fare, which did not prevent my sleeping fairly well.

Your few sweet lines and this special effusion which is their present result, have dispersed my melancholy sufficiently to allow of my going this evening to the Italian Opera, where I very much hope to let you hear Mario in some part suitable to him the day after to-morrow.

Love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 152. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday evening, 2 February, 1846

I have just been enjoying a pleasure which I owe to you, my dear friend ; I am happy in thanking you for it. There were twenty-five francs left out of the fifty that you have been kind enough to lend me this month. I took them to Monsieur Grandchamp as a first instalment of my account with him, and may I whisper in your ear that the receiving of filthy lucre always does make a face look brighter.

I have been spitting blood again these last two nights and suffered much with my throat. That decided me to consent to counter-irritation, and I have just had an issue established. I shall speak of it to *no one* but you, as it is really a woman's secret. This counter-irritation is to go on for three or four months, provided always that my nerves can stand it, for I have to think of them, and am more anxious about them than my lungs. I hope in this to have taken a useful step, and one which will help me.

Wilhelmine is getting on, and is taking shape ; I cannot accuse myself of infatuation for what I am working at, but I feel that it is not commonplace work, and that is all I want as a beginning. The *Memoirs of a Priest* will be going on for another month in the *National*, and I should like to have a chance of being accepted before that time.

I hope, my dear friend, that your kind sympathy will not be wanting to me in my joys any more than in my sorrows, and if the former should fall to my lot we two shall feel them together.

Good-bye till this evening to begin with, and then till Wednesday. You probably have not been to-day at your troublesome labours. I have been giving myself the pleasure of thinking so. Keep well, and believe always in my sincere friendship.

Yours affectionately

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 153. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 5 *February*, 1846 (3 o'clock)

In our delightful meeting yesterday, I explained to you, my very dear friend, how circumstances beyond my control prevented my having the happiness of answering your affectionate letter received the night before. You will not be surprised then at my trying to-day to make up for this loss, without any other reason for writing. Now that entire confidence has gradually sprung up between us, our chaste intimacy asks neither for pretexts nor special purpose in our communications. Nothing but opportunity is necessary for each expression of affection. Does not the fate which condemns us to live habitually apart justify our making use of every possible opportunity?

Indeed, if I wanted to find a special reason for writing to-day, I should certainly find it in the wish to thank you for your last letter, several points of which I was unable to mention to you. You can hardly believe how happy it makes me that your tender affection should care to let me share all that interests you even in the smallest things. We are now able to partake of one another's inmost feelings, for nothing has happened to you for a long time that has not deeply interested me.

When I congratulated you yesterday on your courageous resolution respecting your medical treatment, so rare and so much to be commended in any young and pretty woman, I did not sufficiently express to you how deeply I am touched by your special confidence, that of a wife rather than a friend, by which you gratified me all the more, in that you might so easily have left me in ignorance. Besides my warm gratitude for this loving confidence, be quite sure, my Clotilde, of the perfect secrecy which it naturally deserves. The painful treatment which you are wisely following will result, I have no doubt, in your perfect recovery. But I must also point out another natural result

all the more deserved because you did not follow it with that object ; that is, the tendency of such a treatment to increase your beauty still more by improving your charming freshness of complexion.

I am delighted to hear that *Wilhelmine* is getting on well. I so well know your rare modesty, so noble and yet so artless, that your own satisfaction inspires me with perfect confidence. In the interesting continuation which I am soon expecting I only see so far a source of much pleasure, not a matter for friendly counsel. No one will ever know as well as I how deeply this sacred work is connected with your deep and uncommon sorrows. I helped in its conception and encouraged its first elaboration : I shall feel a personal joy in its success. The happy idea of the two mothers also makes me hope that the public success it desires will not eventually be marred by any domestic misunderstanding : in applying one of the types to herself, your mother will probably avoid choosing the most unfavourable.

How much affectionate gratitude do I not owe you for the deep and artless love expressed in the excellent letter which I have been so long in answering. You are right, my beloved, there will be two who will feel your joys as there were two to feel your sorrows. We henceforth share everything. Be sure that my heart will fail you no more in good fortune than in ill, my noble and tender Clotilde. You who have suffered so greatly and so bravely, how much pleasure it would give me to see you happy and to help in making you so ! Great sorrows, both mental and physical, have now passed for my Clotilde : everything should make us hope that the peaceful happiness which alone is in harmony with her nature is drawing near. Both born, I feel sure, to gain lasting fame, we both have the rare privilege of believing that true happiness really depends upon our inner feelings. In spite of the sadness of our earlier lives, that still weighs upon our whole existence, I hope that we shall eventually obtain in the most fitting way this invaluable reward for our constancy and purity.

Good-bye, adorable companion of the rest of my life. You, who are irrevocably linked to all my thoughts and feelings, to all my plans and hopes, may count upon my trying to make myself ever more and more worthy of you ; I cannot better sum up the whole of my personal future.

Always lovingly and respectfully yours

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 132. From CLAUDE DE VAYX

Thursday evening, 3 February, 1846

MY TENDER FRIEND

I am this moment 6 o'clock going to try to see Monsieur Grandchamp. I will ask him for his apparatus till to-morrow. Will you allow Sophie to come at the usual time to carry out the treatment for me, and to return the thing to its owner on her way back? My head is troubling me, and the operation will relieve it.

As to Saturday will you look upon it as settled that if it has not rained in the morning, I shall be with you at half-past twelve? My circulation will be benefited by the change.

I embrace you tenderly and feel a close affection for you.

CLAUDE DE VAYX

Letter 133. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Friday morning, 6 February, 1846 (at 10 o'clock)

I have just read your note of last night, my dearest friend, and I am sorry that it came too late for Sophie to be able to help you in her usual way. However I send her to take you this short answer, so that she may be of some use to you, if there is still anything to be done. I have just come back from Monsieur Grandchamp, whom I went to see especially on your account. As he said that he had not seen you since Monday, I presume that you did not find him in last night, and that, consequently, you will not have had his apparatus. Still it is best, in any case, that Sophie should go to you at once: she will let me know at least how you are to-day. And in this way you will be able to give her the necessary instructions for to-morrow.

The special conversation that I have just had about you with our doctor has quite satisfied me. Now that he is able to understand fully both your constitution and your general condition, we ought to have full confidence in his unhesitating declaration that you have no organic disease, and that your health will be completely restored.

Immediately after having sent off your letter to me, you will have had my letter of three o'clock yesterday afternoon.

According to your plan, I shall, unless I hear to the contrary, expect you to-morrow instead of going to your house,* if it has not rained in the morning.

Good-bye, my Clotilde ; accept the chaste kiss of your loving friend,

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 156. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday, 9 February, 1846

MY DEAR AND GENEROUS FRIEND

I once more have recourse to your constant kindness. I want to provide myself with a little cupping-apparatus which has again become very necessary to me. I want also some household things which will take up my monthly allowance ; if you will again lend me fifty francs it will be very kind of you. I wish your English friends could only know the care you take of me ; this characteristic instance of our relationship would be a good example for them. Far from having any objection to your mentioning it, I should even like you to do so when opportunity offers, pending my being able to say what I think on the matter.

I hope that I shall find you very well this evening. I am suffering again from my palpitations—for there is evidently some congestion coming again about the heart. If I am not asking too much of you and Sophie, I should be glad to have her again twice a week ; I will arrange for this nursing arrangement not to interfere with the other treatment. For certain reasons, I shall wait till Friday to begin this course : the delay will help me to finish my work.

I had an invitation from the Marrasts this morning for the evening of the 18th February ; I am perplexed to find a reason for declining. I want, as I told you, to keep up with them there as much as I can. I expect you to give me the credit of full confidence in what I said about being quite sure of myself from a certain point of view. I hope then that there will be no need of being less open with you, for this is one of the sweetest effects of our friendship. Some time ago, I wrote a dignified and serious letter to Monsieur M——, which he has *will* enough to understand, and I am certain that he is no longer under any misapprehension

* Image of 7 February, 1846.—Ed.

about me. I shall probably make a pretext of absence for declining, and I shall go to thank them on my *return*.

Good-bye till Wednesday, my dear friend ; you for whom I feel the sincerest esteem and attachment, may you find your reward in my heart !

I embrace you tenderly

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 157. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 10 *February*, 1846 (3 o'clock)

For the last two days, my dearest Clotilde, I have been impatiently trying to find time to write to you, though without any other reason than the ever-recurring desire to say again how much I love you. Your kind letter of last night completes my resolution to carry out this intention.

To-morrow* I shall have the pleasure of handing you what you ask for. My present pecuniary difficulties, which, however, I expect will soon come to an end in some way or other, will never be such as to prevent me from having this pleasure, as I foresaw from the beginning. You may also count upon our kind Sophie resuming her visits to you twice a week, beginning on Friday morning. I am sure she will always have as much pleasure as I have in these regular ministrations to you, for they scarcely increase her light daily work. You are wise in buying this cupping-pump, so that you can use it when you please, without troubling our doctor, but I would suggest, however, asking him to say a word on your behalf to the instrument maker.

How could I be otherwise than touched, my dear friend, by the authority which you offer to give me in regard to the slight assistance which I have had the happiness of seeing you accept. While the feeling that actuates it comes most naturally from a heart like yours, I own that I had not anticipated it. But however grateful I feel, I cannot make up my mind to use the authority so tenderly offered. The circumstances, if made known would perhaps not be appreciated in the same noble way that your high-minded nature had hoped. All these little secrets of our friendship must never pass outside the bounds of our hearts. Besides, the example would doubtless have no effect on those who are

* Image of 11 *February*, 1846.—Ed.

giving me pecuniary support. Their decision would be determined by motives of another kind, especially relating to the highest public interests, unaffected by any private relations. Let us credit them with this view in the common interests of philosophy and Humanity. Besides, I am far from having lost all hope of inducing them to carry out in a suitable way the noble purpose with which they originally came forward. Let us then continue to enjoy, without introducing other considerations, the simple mutual satisfaction of accepting and offering the secret natural pledges of truly intimate friendship. My public life in its struggles, and even in its sorrows, must never expect anything from our holy affection beyond the powerful support resulting indirectly from the precious consolations and the noble impulses which I have already found in it.

The full confidence that you have shown me, respecting the invitation you received yesterday, touches me deeply. You are right to regard it as one of the sweetest fruits of our friendship, of which it is also a natural outcome, for I should be deeply grieved if you hid anything important from me. I will rely fully in this matter on the unchangeable firmness of your resolutions, though I am not always quite certain of your being invariably prudent in your actions. As regards yourself, my cautions will never be suspected by you of any personal bias, and I hope that the severity with which I had judged the general tenor of Monsieur Marrast's conduct towards you has not in any wise disturbed your general feeling of safety in your relations with him. So there is nothing to prevent me from freely offering my advice in this new development.

If you now think you had better be contented with simply declining, you have no need of inventing any pretext, since your health affords only too sufficient ground, from your always being obliged scrupulously to avoid the crowding and heat of evening entertainments, to say nothing of late hours. But I think it would be better to take this opportunity of keeping yourself strictly to literary relations with this individual, free from all personal connexions. Besides that this attitude agrees with your own task, particularly after what has passed, it seems to me that it is of much consequence to your true interests. For, without that, you will with difficulty keep to the desirable relation with him, which the necessity of resisting his odious attempts might otherwise make you suddenly break off; everything leads us to

suppose that Monsieur Marrast has in no way given up his infamous designs. However serious and dignified your recent letter may have been, it will hardly have been able to convince the mind, when the feeling, or rather the want of feeling, would be entirely opposed to it. On the contrary, it might bring up again some objectionable hopes by allowing him to suppose an unexpressed desire of renewing personal relations. As I told you two months ago, this influential journalist will never cease, with regard to you especially, to reckon on the ascendancy of his position and the glamour of his talent. It might be well to seize this opportunity of assuming once for all towards him, before you send in your present work, the only permanent attitude which is really fitting.

Moreover, I suppose that your brother with whom you have paid your calls there was also invited. If they did not invite him they behaved most improperly, not only towards him, but also towards you, for they are quite aware that a young lady cannot attend such gatherings alone, without making a kind of implied appeal for escort home to any of the men present who are free. This neglect would confirm unmistakably and most fully his persistence in evil designs, and the necessity of guarding yourself carefully against them.

Farewell, my beloved, whom the sanctity of our relationship permits me to cherish, not only as a tender sister, but also as my only true wife. Accept on your noble brow the chaste sign of my respectful love.

Ate COMTE

Letter 158. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday evening, 12 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

I have just come from the exhibition of pictures (Bonne-Nouvelle), with which I am sure you will be pleased. They have reserved for Ingres' pictures a small space from which it is difficult to tear oneself away.

This pleasure has not made me forget the kind things you wrote to me yesterday, and I am happy to thank you for them at leisure. Your heart is one of those so rarely to be found that those who meet with them become almost privileged beings. Since I have known you I have looked upon myself as one of these.

In regard to formal invitations, I give as I get. I have thanked Mme. Marrast, saying that I should not be in Paris on the 18th. I think, dear friend, that a refusal without any excuse would have seemed rather abrupt, and I should be very sorry to be considered either prudish or huffy like some women who are not very sure of themselves.

Monsieur M — is not the sort of man to persist, even in a passing fancy, and I quite think he may be useful to me for simple business reasons. Besides my experience of the world has relieved me from fear in this respect. My brother was not asked, but the attitude I take as an independent woman gives me the right to go alone, even to the most proper evening parties. I wish gradually to drop having any recourse to family escorts for occasions of this kind. A young widow may be supposed to be escorted by her maid or manservant. I might have closer ties without the world being any the wiser. I am of opinion that one should not flaunt what custom usually veils; you are the only man in whose company I can have been seen; and when I asked you to excuse my going out with you it was certainly not from any whim, but from a habit of six years' standing.

I hope, my dear friend, that you will approve of what I have done. In your heart, as in a sanctuary, I lay my whole life; small events as great ones are all known to you, and you know that I have hitherto done harm to no one but myself.

I close this in great haste to post it before 8 o'clock.

I embrace you as tenderly as I love you.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 159. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 12 February, 1846 (3 o'clock)

MY DEAREST FRIEND

In my judgment the day before yesterday of your relations with Monsieur Marrast, I carefully avoided, as I had always done, bringing in any consideration respecting myself, so as to concentrate your attention on the motives which concern yourself alone. But in order to anticipate or to put aside anything savouring of an after-thought or of a false position, which would sooner or later impair true friendship, I now think it right to draw your attention to some points touching me personally, which are quite free

from any motive that I could not frankly own; they deserve a serious examination, an opportunity for which has not hitherto occurred. This is the only way of having an exhaustive explanation on a matter, the consequences of which require your careful attention in order to weigh every point.

I shall never be afraid of your being the object of any really chivalrous rivalry, based of course on straightforward lines, which would leave me the hope of winning honourably. A noble emulation may be as good for the mutual improvement of the several rivals as for the real happiness of their idol. But I could not enter into competition with anyone who made use of unfair methods which I could not employ. Now this is my real position with regard to Monsieur Marrast.

So long as I was in ignorance of the way he actually behaved towards you, I had no uneasy feeling in regard to him. Though his conduct had never seemed to me as disinterested as it might have been; and whatever reason I had for my slight esteem of his general morality, I could not at first fear that he would use any unworthy means. Accordingly, without hiding from myself the advantages given by his position and his agreeable manner, I had reason to believe that if he used them always in a truly loyal way they would never overmatch the depth and purity of my affection in the case of a woman so well able to appreciate the intrinsic value intellectually and morally of each of us. I should then have accepted without fear this secret rivalry which, by exciting both of us to deserve you better, would have re-acted beneficially and honourably upon you. You would yourself have thus been able to perceive and to encourage this noble emulation if you had recognised a sincere affection in both of us.

The same security cannot exist for me, nor an equal neutrality for you, since you have disclosed to me Monsieur Marrast's ignoble conduct. We are not now speaking of love as it is usually understood, but of the relation of pure friendship. You could not, Clotilde, remain at the same time a friend to me and also to a man whom I despise, and I despise him especially for his conduct towards you. As for him, I defy him to have any contempt for me, but I probably inspire him with an aversion mixed with envy, at least so far as his frivolity and weakness permit him to feel anything deeply. I need hardly tell you that without actively helping my enemies, he left them a free field, although his full knowledge of the baseness of their machinations required him to oppose

these with a resistance which would have been as easy as it would have been honourable to him in his position.

True friendship cannot remain indifferent to these several motives. It is in the name of this friendship that I now venture my Clotilde, to ask you straightforwardly, and for my sake as for your own, to cease having with this individual any but simply business relations, without anything further.

My letter of the day before yesterday has, I hope, convinced you that this line of conduct will henceforth be as suited to your true interests as to your own tastes. In begging you to-day to reward my attachment by this resolution, I am quite as much seeking to correct any dangerous unsettled state in you as to procure for my own feelings the security which is their due. You cannot of your own free choice keep up personal relations with a demoralised creature whom you have so much reason to despise. Indeed, far from business requiring such relations to be kept up, it should rather be a special reason for avoiding them in order to strengthen any purely literary relations that may be needful, such as those of author and publisher or, if you like, of workman and employer. I may then ask you, on my own behalf, to follow this line of conduct without any risk of ever having to reproach myself with injuring your career in any way for my own satisfaction.

Your exceptionally high mind will always prevent, my dear Clotilde, your underestimating and despising the moral dangers naturally pertaining to a literary life, especially at the present day. The most serious of these certainly consists in the abasement of personal dignity, through the seducing influences, so difficult to resist entirely, which the power of granting a more or less ephemeral fame and still more of giving or withholding publicity, brings with it. When encouraging you to follow honourably this risky occupation, I have reckoned on your peculiar high-mindedness to preserve you from all these dangers, once they have been duly pointed out to you. This is why my affection should not hesitate now, even at the risk of passing displeasure, to point out to you frankly the fatal path on which a single unwise step might make you enter; for its natural consequences might bring serious trouble on you, and deep sorrow on me.

The unjust attempts hitherto made on your independence in the name of the dearest affections, might indeed, my very dear friend, if you did not know me so well, give you some excuse

for distrusting an exhortation which, however friendly, might easily be taken for an attempt to domineer over you. But you must by this time understand my whole character so well that there can be no room for my fearing an interpretation by you to which my nature and habits are so opposed. I am not exceeding in any way the rights that necessarily belong to true attachment, either in openly putting forward my uneasiness or in frankly requesting your compliance ; in this respect I am quite disposed to allow you perfect reciprocity should such a case ever occur. The union of our hearts is too precious for either of us to hesitate in carefully removing at their first appearance, any influences likely to trouble the harmony, which is regarded, I hope, by each of us, as the principle source of the inward happiness which we both expect for the rest of our lives.

With respectful love

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 160. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday, 13 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

Since the word that I gave you as a true woman is not sufficient to allay your fears regarding the attempts to which you think me exposed, what would be the good of the very relative promise you ask of me ? You know that I am not Monsieur M —'s friend and never have been ; that the relations between us have been both short and entirely commonplace ; you also know that I have not seen him for four or five months, nor have I tried to see him ; he sends me a family invitation which I decline, taking care, of course, not to change into enmity the interest hitherto shown me. I do not see how I can do either more or less, and it would be mere affectation to credit you with any share in the matter. It is not in his office that Monsieur M — would try to seduce me, neither would it be in the apartment in which his wife is living, and, as you see, he is not likely to set foot in mine without invitation. In this lies my only means of showing distrust of him, and I keep this in reserve.

In regard to the unsettled state you fear for my mind, nothing I can say can allay your uneasiness on that point. This is not the most difficult moment of my life ; far from it, and I have less reason than ever for any hasty impulse, so I hope to get

over the one or two remaining difficulties without breaking my neck. I have been greatly helped by your attachment. I have acknowledged to you all the real good you have done me, and no one rivals you in my esteem and affection; I must say, then, that I am astonished to find you harping on an incident of which I told you quite freely and quite in the simplicity of my heart. Indeed, what you say might lead a younger woman to evil thoughts.

At all events, my dear friend, count as much as you possibly can on my sincerity towards you; I like you very much; it is not love, unfortunately for myself more than for you, but it is a high-placed feeling such as comes to one perhaps but rarely in life. My perfectly decorous behaviour with other men takes away any legitimate excuse for complaint from you; so do not be troubled, and leave me to manage my own business quietly.

I embrace you affectionately.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 161. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday evening, 15 February, 1846

While thinking this morning over my afternoon lecture, I promised myself, my dearest friend, that if I was entirely satisfied with it, I should treat myself to an evening consecrated entirely to you. As it came fully up to my expectations, I have hurried back, contrary to my usual custom, on the conclusion of my philosophic address, in order fully to enjoy this happiness. Although you can only get this by to-morrow's post, I should reproach myself if I were to put off this sweet task for a moment without real necessity. I have just given orders to Sophie, so that I may not be disturbed, to admit no one, not even my good daily visitor, allowing no exception but that which has been allowed to all such orders for the last nine months. I have by to-day's work merited this inappreciable satisfaction so far as to warrant my taking all precautions to ensure its full enjoyment.

Even the impossibility of a letter reaching you unexpectedly this evening will, I hope, afford me a greater pleasure by making me inclined to take my time over this full expansion of my heart, and even to prolong it without hesitation, so that I shall not mind interrupting it sometimes to look upon and kiss *the gift of the heart* lovingly placed upon this paper.

You will easily understand, my Clotilde, the special connection between the success of to-day's lecture and the heartfelt reward I had promised myself for it; for its success was specially due to our complete understanding of yesterday* without which it would have been impossible. I have learnt on this occasion to bless your pleasant arrangement for our weekly meetings from a new point of view. Indeed, if the moral cloud, which yesterday was cleared away at its very gathering, had persisted until to-morrow, this disturbance of my feelings would have spoilt, or at least interfered with, perhaps the most momentous lecture of this philosophical course, since I had to carry out the definitive transition from the intellectual to the social point of view.

I have thought it well, dear friend, not to refer to our yesterday's explanations, and I hope that even the subject that was the cause will never come up again. With regard to it, my request and your refusal remained equally within the natural bounds of the freedom belonging to our present intimacy, so that this incident cannot leave one side or the other the slightest trace of bitterness. What my heart alone craved for yesterday was the satisfactory clearing up of the quite excusable, though baseless doubt which I had had the misfortune to raise in your mind, with regard to the fulness of my unchanging confidence in the sincerity of your promises and the firmness of your resolutions. So I hope that you will now remain free from any doubts on this subject. As to the other dangers which might unjustly have arisen from my insistence by giving you some fear of an encroachment, however friendly, on your freedom of action, I saw yesterday that the precautions I had unconsciously taken about this were quite right, or, I may say, fortunately needless, since, while you rejected my request, your previous appreciation of my real character was sufficient to preserve you from any such suspicion. I hope, moreover, that this passing cloud will not have affected your usual sweet tendency, so necessary and so much to my credit, to confide to me unreservedly everything which concerns you in every possible way. You are incapable of wishing to continue punishing the unwilful fault of an instant, so I have not the slightest fear of anything arising to disturb my satisfaction at the friendly ending of a serious difficulty. This happy conviction and my wise abstinence from musical excitement enabled me to enjoy with happy calmness the best night I have had since

* Image of 14 February, 1846.—*Ed.*

I have devoted myself to you. For my long and sound sleep was only interrupted for one hour, of which you can easily guess what sweet use I made. Your happy influence was the cause of this most beneficial preparation for the successful lecture I have just given.

This passing cloud will yet leave in my heart a permanent sad impression. Do not think, my beloved, that this is caused by the unusual and involuntary reserve of the manner in which you received me yesterday. For not only did it pass away, but I immediately felt that I had deserved it for having given you a moment's pain, even unintentionally and unthinkingly. But I shall never forget the troubled look that your heavenly face could ill conceal, for it seemed on my arrival to reproach me silently with having deceived your dearest hopes by giving you reason to fear a new source of sorrow in the holy intimacy whence you now deign to draw some compensation for your great past griefs. Your look alone then wrung my heart more than could have done any of the reproaches from which you so affectionately refrained. It will always be associated in my deepest memory with that touching rejoinder which moved me so much at the end of your tender letter of Thursday evening: *you know that I have hitherto done harm to no one but myself.*

Yes, my Clotilde, the sublime simplicity of this twofold indirect reproach will always be sufficient to prevent anything in deed, and even, I hope, in thought, which might cause it to recur. Though I do not pretend that I am completely free from that sad jealousy seemingly inseparable from true love, yet the deep conviction I always keep of your beautiful nature will always preserve me from its more serious attacks, above all from their having any re-action upon you. I had never known of any instance of such perfect loyalty, combined with such exquisite purity and without the slightest taint of prudery or of self-consciousness. So rare a moral combination one would only think capable of realisation at the expense of the intellect. What incomparable happiness then is it for me to have found it in one of the foremost types of the true womanly mind. You know pretty well to whom it was that I unfortunately wished to consecrate my life. Certainly in no respect, indeed far otherwise, was she a commonplace woman, but her radical want of moral purity was sufficient to bring about an almost complete miscarriage of any higher intellectual power, the development of which was thus neutralised by a blind individuality, an outrageous pride, and a measureless vanity. If the heart

is always indispensable to a durable elevation of mind, this is especially so in your sex, though even with ours its presence is necessary to produce a real harmony. Congratulate yourself then, noble and tender-hearted Clotilde, that the fair future promised by your intellectual eminence rests upon so firm and solid a base, the more securely guaranteed by your natural fear of any taint to it. You will live long enough after me, I hope, to be able one day to enjoy even publicly the reputation you will gain from my prophetic appreciation of you. As for me, I hope that, as a consequence of my indefatigable perseverance, your sincere modesty will be prevailed upon to allow me to render a suitable and solemn homage to this exceptionally high nature ; were it even merely in order to offer indirectly to your sex a worthy type, more efficacious in its reality than the best philosophical demonstrations. This combination, the single one of decided value, which unites moral purity to mental superiority, has only been realised in our days by the illustrious woman, a remarkable work by whom I have begged you to read.* But a most unfortunate physical defect necessarily impaired the natural ascendancy belonging to such a character, of which it will be reserved for you, I hope, to make the true value appreciated.

I am obliged, my beloved, to put off many of the outpourings of my heart, which I should have addressed to you to-day. You see that I have not been able even to give you special thanks for the tender indulgence with which you appreciated my heart in the first of the two letters to which this is a direct reply. But I hope that my silence has not prevented you from feeling how deeply I was touched by an estimate not applying merely to my mind, which is too exclusively the subject of the commonplace admiration of which I am supposed to be greedy. There remains but one way to acknowledge your kind praise as it deserves : it is to try always to deserve it more and more. There is one quality at least to which I venture a well-founded claim : it is a sincere natural tendency always to recognise any real or even intended obligation. It is you, my Clotilde, that I am bound to make the principal object of this gratitude, on account of the deep improvement, intellectual as well as moral, of which our intimacy is, in my case, the direct source, and not, as your admirable modesty makes you think, simply the occasion. It is by worshipping you that I become better in every way, and this improvement makes

* *Sophie Germain.—Ed.*

me love you all the more. Such is the chain of happy results which obliges me to thank you for it daily.

Farewell then, my beloved friend, though I must regret to have to bring this sweet converse to an end, the priceless reward of a good day's work. Thanks to the sweet interruptions which I said I should allow myself, I have come unconsciously to the time when it is reasonable for a philosopher to go to bed : they will, I hope, procure me under their healthful influence as restful a night as the last one, with the sure knowledge that any waking hours in it will be spontaneously consecrated to you. Farewell then, my Clotilde, until the interview in the domestic circle to-morrow, happily prefacing our delightful Wednesday. Deign to receive tenderly the chaste though close embraces of my respectful love.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 162. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday night (11 o'clock), 16 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

I must ask a real favour of you. I hope, however, that it will be quite convenient to you, and that you will not in any way put yourself to much inconvenience in granting it.

I have just come back from the rue Pavée, where the question about Max was discussed after you left. It was agreed that the recommendation you were kind enough to promise him to Monsieur Talabot would be most useful, if made before to-morrow's committee meeting, while if made later it would be of comparatively little use. If you could possibly go and speak to him to-morrow instead of Thursday, you would be doing us a real service. I know very well that I am asking you for an act of real generosity, but then I know your generous nature. Whether Max goes for a personal interview will depend on the answer you send me, which need be simply yes or no. If you expect to be there about nine o'clock, he will arrange to be there soon after you.

I shall probably send you word by Sophie to-morrow ; just now my messenger is waiting, so I have had to be brief.

I wish you good-night.

CLOTILDE DE V.

Letter 163. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday morning, 17 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

How very much I thank you for so kindly doing what you did. It will give as much pleasure as it will do good, I hope, at rue Pavée. I am glad for you and for them.

We will have a talk to-morrow after I have been to have it out with old Monsieur Granch. I feel exhausted this morning after having passed whole hours of the night in coughing ; my heart is as unsteady as a card-house, it feels as if it would fall to pieces : Peace, however, to men of good-will ! But I see that in this world I shall have to try cod-liver oil. Many thanks for yesterday's kind letter. These lines are only just to say good morning to you, and, as I was saying, we will have a talk to-morrow.

I embrace you affectionately.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 164. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday afternoon, 22 February, 1846 (4 o'clock)

To make up for to-day's enforced idleness, I am naturally led, my dearest friend, to consecrate to you the greater part of the unforeseen leisure either in writing to you or in reading over your letters. Perhaps on your side you may be led to carry out the kind intention which came to nothing the day before yesterday, so as to convert my day of philosophical disappointment into one of deep satisfaction.

Notwithstanding the unusual length of my last letter, it was, as I mentioned at the end of it, far from exhausting all that I had intended to say to you when I began it. Moreover, the same spring disturbance which prevents me to-day from utilising this unexpectedly free day for my work, involuntarily reminds me of the happy time when my heart first began to be irrevocably yours. You will not be much surprised then at my feeling a special desire to celebrate between ourselves this kind of anniversary, starting from which, my tender recollections will begin to become periodical. I cannot fulfil this sweet duty better than by continuing from this new point of view my former thanks for the deep personal improvement I owe to your adorable influence.

This inexhaustible subject has been showing for some time past an aspect that I had not hitherto perceived, but now becoming more and more evident from the marked modifications which the state of my feelings has gradually brought about in most of my daily habits, and, I may say, even in my general bodily constitution. It would be strange indeed if an impression as deep as it is strong, marked at its beginning by a true nervous crisis, did not leave in this respect some deep and indelible traces.

During the persistence of the prolonged agitation necessarily resulting from such a shock, this permanent influence on my deeper nature was necessarily hidden by the disturbances consequent on an unsettled state of health. But the sleeplessness and the convulsive symptoms about the beginning of this year began to disappear, with the exception of some passing occasions, under the calming influence of our definitive explanation in December: I think I can refer their almost complete disappearance to the effect on my heart of the essay which I consecrated to you on the philosophical theory of marriage. From that time I have felt more and more that my respectful love does not end with the production of an exceptional excitement, and that without having in any wise cooled, it is henceforth thoroughly incorporated with the whole of my usual life. It is especially in this way that I shall feel its precious effects more and more. The life of affection, which arose so late in me for want of a worthy object of adoration, now attains, thanks to you, its due natural strength. It makes me feel more and more what I owe you for this moral resurrection, for which I already began to thank you last spring, but which I now appreciate all the more as it becomes more familiar to me.

I had never understood so well the naturally deep meaning of that excellent word *attachment*, used by popular wisdom to describe the true affection of which the most valuable property lies in its natural tendency to *attach* us deeply to life by constituting an irresistible adhesion of two beings drawn together by the peculiar necessities of their natures. I, who may pride myself on having known by long experience the sublime joys of contemplative life, I now venture to assert that nothing in human existence can be compared to the steady happiness resulting from pure affection, not even the deep and lofty satisfaction given by the discovery of great truths. What do I not then owe you, my Clotilde, you who have at last led me to this supreme happiness!

It is not only that you have given an opportunity for this to a heart eager for deep affection. In the influence of your personality upon our relations there is a great deal more than you, in your beautiful modesty, like to believe. For how otherwise could a heart with such tendencies as mine have been so long in finding what it required? If the course of events had led it within the influence of a less noble attraction, this would already have ceased through the inadequate satisfaction of the yearnings of my nature. But my affection, on the contrary, after a year's trial, is deeper and no less intense than when it first arose. Arising in a period of storm, it rooted itself in the calm which followed, and it has never ceased to afford me a first and at the same time a last love, which all my daily thoughts strengthen more and more. Would a philosopher, accustomed from boyhood to the highest kind of meditation, have been able in his full maturity to allow his heart to be thus absorbed, if his adoration had not been addressed to a truly distinguished nature? Several women have gained immortality by the empire they have had over men born for posterity. You, my Clotilde, whose name may acquire more personal rights to the eternal remembrance of posterity, you will, I hope, also increase my own claim to its incomparable gratitude.

The ever-recurring desire to offer you the deep gratitude of my heart has led me insensibly to write a rather long letter without having even touched on the subject specially in my thoughts when I began it. I do not, however, forget what I have to tell you on a subject which fortunately will keep, as it is of a permanent character, and may thus before long give rise to a new pleasure. This precious compensation for the disturbance in my philosophical work leaves me no other regret than my usual sorrow at being unable to express what I so deeply feel. But your ready penetration will, as usual, complete my inadequate expressions, which are always hampered, much to my regret, by the false shame of anything like sentimental affectation, on which point I know, however, that you have long ago given full credit to my character. Besides, my situation to-day is enough almost to excuse any want of eloquence in my expressions. For without any work on hand, I remain insensible, after an excellent night, to the beautiful day which would attract me out of doors, so that I may the better enjoy this affectionate outpouring in which more and more the principal satisfaction of my life is concentrated,

trying even to prolong it by innocent artifices. Though I am aware that you willingly appreciate the expression of my sentiments, I feel almost as much pleasure in abandoning myself to writing them as if they could be delivered to you by the post this very evening. It is true that you know me well enough not to have to wait until to-morrow to be sure that I have instinctively consecrated this exceptional Sunday to you.

Farewell, my perfect friend. Notwithstanding the fatal disparity of our respective feelings, I feel that you will never disdain the chaste caresses of my respectful love.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 165. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday, 23 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

Yesterday, I had the same thought as you had. I wanted to have spent in conversation with you a few moments of a beautiful day devoted to pleasure ; but I had one or two fits of such a very unphilosophical mood that I thought myself unworthy to write to you ; and I put off doing so until to-day ; but you will only have the benefit of it by the opportunity Sophie's coming to-morrow will give, for I have missed the chance of posting it.

I cannot say that I am dying, and I do not want to worry anybody with troubles of that sort, but I am getting whiffs of fever again. I tried to get rid of it by some of Monsieur Grandchamp's sedative medicines, and two glasses of it were enough to cause a thorough upset of my system. Heaven grant that in relieving my bronchitis I do not damage my stomach and renew in my inward parts the condition in which they were during my childhood ! I got a little relief from the use of mallow, the good effect of which I have often proved. I shall keep to it until my work is finished ; then I shall take a month of the most absolute rest, during which time I shall try the effect of cod-liver oil. My dear friend, do not even speak of my health to Sophie : talking about it wearies me in every respect. There are some days in which I should like to bear my sufferings shut up in a nut-shell. I know the causes and the effects, etc., and in this matter nobody can be of any use to me for anything.

Certainly this letter has begun very selfishly ; but I had to explain to you why it comes so late ; this done I will begin by

thanking you for yours, which is, as **always**, another **jewel** added to **the crown of** your attachment. In my hours of suffering your image always hovers **before** me. I say to myself that an **affection** so **well** tried as yours for me should soften everything: and, indeed, you often console me **unwittingly**, perhaps even **while** you are scolding your pupils.

Indeed, I am now on the right road, the one I would choose rather than that which falls to **the lot of many** others: I only **regret** still feeling myself sometimes the prey of the past by the exhaustion in which it has left me. But everyone has troubles in life. One must in some way or other pay the toll exacted by our common humanity: and there are very great joys belonging to the artistic temperament.

Good-night, dear friend. I shall see you on Wednesday, unless I should be half in bed as I am to-day. I should **like** to take refuge **there** often. I should work **wonderfully well** there; **only** I should be afraid of interruptions.

I embrace you most affectionately.

CATHERINE

Letter 166. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday afternoon, 24 *February*, 1844. 3 o'clock.

I had intended, dear friend, to devote to my work the **whole** of to-day's **enjoyable** holiday. But with the uneasiness naturally arising from your painful **absence** yesterday evening, I had not sufficient freedom of mind left this morning to **do** so. Until **Sophie came back** I had to content myself with wandering thoughts **much** more about you **than** about my work; **unable** even to read with any attention, although my health keeps up **well**. Though the news I have just had of you is **not** at all satisfactory, yet I prefer it to the cruel uncertainty in which I was **before**. The charming letter also **which** Sophie brought **back** would quite **comfort** me, were it only for the peaceful repose **which** it shows you **have gained** amid your **bodily** sufferings, **if only** it had been **written** this morning. But, as it was written before the very **bad** night you have just had, it cannot give me the satisfaction I should **like** as to your actual condition.

You have done wisely in suspending our doctor's severe counter-irritating treatment, directly your system revolted

against it, for it is, as you think, most important to keep your digestive apparatus in good working order. I hope that you took the precautions in this respect early enough to prevent any lasting perturbation: but prompt attention was required by such symptoms. Perhaps Monsieur Grandchamp has not sufficiently taken into consideration the collateral dangers of his energetic treatment: Broussais would have been more careful; at least, you might have been warned to use it only at times when you could give your fullest attention to it, especially when you had no mental work. Now that this plan of treatment begins to gain ground, there is too much carelessness in its use. Medicine which two years ago would have been prescribed only with bed and strict dietary, can scarcely be appropriate now, even in much smaller doses, to persons leading their usual lives. I agree then with your resolve to put off any further trial of it, till the time, doubtless not far distant, when you will be able to use it under the conditions necessary for it to be fully efficacious. This decision will have been too fully justified by experience for the doctor not to agree with it, even though he may have no idea of your determined resignation.

From the present sad state of your health, I can scarcely count, dearest friend, on to-morrow bringing your welcome weekly visit. But I shall send Sophie in the morning to know how you are, and also in order that you may ask her without any hesitation to do anything necessary for you. When this morning you hardly ventured to ask her to do something for you which was of considerable importance, you were showing an unnecessary hesitation, which I venture as a friend to reprove. You may at the same time let me know if I am to expect you, or if not, whether I may come; I need hardly tell you how sweet either would be to me; but you also know how important I think it to save you the least exertion.

When going to see you to-morrow, Sophie will have instructions to call and enquire about your mother, who seemed yesterday to be somewhat out of sorts, though not dangerously so, as a consequence, I presume, of some neglected chill. Besides her usual nervous symptoms, I remarked a slight stitch in her side, which, if it continues, will perhaps require the application of half-a-dozen leeches. I also heard while there the good news from Mâcon and also the reason of the long stay there. However natural this explanation may be, I suspect, between ourselves, that there may

have been a little diplomacy in it, for the purpose of making the young mother's return more wished for, and thus hasten it; for it is not unlikely that she may regard herself as really sentenced to a kind of temporary banishment, in consequence of some arbitrary maternal caprice.

I have kept rather too much to the end of this letter the special affectionate thanks so well deserved by the new testimony of your precious affection in the charming letter that I have just read over again; but though I have scarcely time left to speak of the sincerity and depth of my gratitude, yet I am aware that you already know these quite well. These proofs of your feeling naturally form the principal reward of my pure devotion. In the holy ties of union with my Clotilde, notwithstanding the different nature of our tender feelings, I feel strength enough to bear anything; while the least flaw in this bond, which is the foundation of my life, would tend to break down all my energy. From its very beginning this priceless sympathy enabled me to bear some crosses almost unnoticed, which without such a protection would perhaps have disturbed me deeply. New persecutions, though very unlikely to arise, would now only affect me in so much as they affected you, and that I am fortunately sure of always being able to avoid. In my philosophical formula of human life 'to think, to love, to act,' I have thus placed affection between speculation and action only to point out its necessary tendency to dominate equally over both; our horizontal system of writing cannot give quite a faithful picture of an ideal basis of this sort: painting alone could express it suitably.

Farewell, my adorable friend, if I find that I am not to see you at all to-morrow, I expect to make up for it a little by some new outpouring of my feeling. My letter of the day before yesterday has left much more to be said, and I have barely been able to-day to sketch my affectionate thanks. I chastely kiss the brow and the knees of my Clotilde.

Love and respect

A^{te}. COMTE

Letter 167. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Tuesday evening, 24 February, 1846.

I shall try, though with trembling hand, to reply a few words to you, dear friend. I have been at complete rest all day, so I feel somewhat refreshed.

My pulse is at about 100 still, and I do not quite know what to do for it. But by dint of thinking about my wretched body I have come to the conclusion that fever must always be caused by some kind of inflammation, and that the more I can calm the irritation about my chest, the better it will be. There is some truth in the idea that doctors have their bad side. It seems as if the patient's account of himself was a disappointment to them., and so they shut his mouth with a diagnosis and his stomach with a pill. What vanity !

I am afraid all this will interfere sadly with the ending up of my story, and yet I cannot be really quiet until I have done this. My mother is obliged to have the doctor in to-day ; I was very sorry not to be with her then, yet I held out, for such efforts cost me too dear. I do not think I shall go to-morrow either, and I shall take half-a-day in bed. So, dear friend, do not come to see me. I shall probably be able to get out on Saturday.

I return you all your affectionate expressions. As you say, I do not think that anything could disturb our attachment. The affection which has accepted painful necessities must be firmly cemented. Souls full of scruples and ardour meet with many a Golgotha in this world : but at least they often escape regret and remorse

Rely on a holy affection on my side, dear friend. I should like to give you proofs of it, but where to find them ?

Our hosts at Garges called to-day to invite us to a party. I have not myself received an invitation, but in any case I should have to decline there also.

I hope that my month's rest will set me up again. Oh that I could finish my child in one good day's work !

Good-night, dear friend, Sophie will take you these few lines, they are the only result of the day. I embrace you tenderly.

CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Letter 168. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday evening, 25 February, 1846

How touched I was, dear friend, by the loving efforts you must have made yesterday evening to send me an immediate

answer! Fortunately Sophie brought me better news this morning. You have very prudently done what was necessary to assuage that abominable fever which I attribute, as you did, to the irritation of the digestive system by that horrible oil; rest in bed, strict dietary of body and mind, and soothing drinks, these and nothing more were required. I hope that by persevering in them to-day's improvement will be almost perfect by to-morrow. Sophie will ascertain this when she takes you this letter. According to her report on your mother's health, you should now be quite free from anxiety.

The only thing I fear about you would be the consequence of a natural impatience to take up your work again rather too soon. Be prudent and firm to the end, my Clotilde. I fully share your reasonable regret at the sad delay just at the last moment in bringing forth work so interesting in many ways, in which the whole of a painful past co-operates to build up a noble future. But even for the sake of your remarkable creation, resolve to put off ending it until your precious health, which is the first condition of your just hopes, shall safely allow it. Do not take up your pen again before the fever has completely gone, and resign yourself to stop immediately if your pulse should quicken. The month of entire rest, which you intend to devote exclusively to the care of your health after the work is ended, will perhaps have to be taken before that. You must not object to this delay should it become really necessary; though treatment can scarcely be fully efficacious unless helped by the calm state of mind which will naturally follow the satisfactory ending of your important work. These are however, my beloved, strong measures, which I advise only as a matter of precaution, without having reason to believe in their immediate necessity. On the contrary, I have every hope that the present trouble will be overcome by the precautions which you will prudently take, and that you will be able, in the course of next week, to set to work again quietly without imprudence. We must beware, however, of the treacherous excitement consequent on the approach of spring, so much earlier this year in consequence of the unusual mildness. One may make use of this natural effect without letting it get the mastery of us, but it is always a delicate matter, especially with your constitution. This equinox, still more than that in the autumn, should always make you extremely careful.

Since I am beginning to be easier about your health, I may, without hesitation, prolong a conversation which softens your absence, by carrying out the secret intention which I announced to you at the beginning of my last letter but one, but which was put aside by the necessity I felt for some expression of my tenderness. A longer silence on this subject might perhaps make you suppose that there was a mysterious importance about this matter, when there is really none. It deals, as you know, with the lasting change brought by my happy affection into the whole of my personal habits and even, in some respects, of my bodily health.

At the beginning there was a serious crisis, perhaps even, I may now say, a dangerous one. Without a strict watch over my physical health, prescribed to me specially by terrible experience, I was threatened for nearly a month with a return of the attack of the fatal mental malady of my youth, if any recurrence of my usual worries had then aggravated this unstable condition of my nervous system. But all chance of such danger disappeared a long time ago, though the nervous consequences persisted up to the beginning of the present year. It was by this feverish agitation that I had in my maturity to pay for the exceptional retardation of that which I should have acquired in youth.

Since this inestimable affection has incorporated itself deeply with my whole being, I have only to enjoy in peace its happy natural influence over the remainder of my life. I have often mentioned the good effect, however tardy, not less on my mind than on my character, of this initiation, of which I had felt the want though I had not been able to satisfy it as it deserved. You can now perceive that these repeated explanations are not affectionate compliments but the simple expression of a truth which had been hitherto unknown to me. The physical improvement due to this holy evolution has already more than compensated the dangers attending its outset ; were it only through the healthy *régime* that I have thus been led to adopt permanently, and to which I attribute the complete cure of a disorganised stomach.

At the cost of some mental disturbance, which fortunately did not last long, my health and my habits of life became permanently modified for the better almost imperceptibly. I may note one of these which will seem very characteristic to you, and in which even your scrupulousness cannot but recognise your evident influence over me. It is a disposition to sedentary life, which,

thanks to the absorption of my affections, takes the place of my old habit of over-long walks, a habit contracted at first under the necessity of escaping as much as possible from a home full of pain. While formerly I could not stay at home when not fixed to my writing table, I now pass whole days of my own free will in delicious musings, as I did on Sunday, yesterday, and to-day. I have no doubt that my future work will find great help in this improvement in my habits; even my musical evenings out are much less frequent, certainly not from my having become less impressionable to really esthetic emotions, for on the contrary these have become even more precious to me in consequence of my sweet affection for you. In my various excursions from home, at least since there has been peace in it, I recognise that there was a secret craving for affection, for it was not the society of men that I sought. Having never been under the domination of my passions what should I do at gatherings of women now that my heart is full of you?

This leads me, beloved one, to point out to you the most delicate and the most precious of the improvements, both physical and moral, which I owe to your sacred ascendancy over me. For I can thus venture at last to thank you for a voluntary chastity which I had never understood, which is certainly your work, notwithstanding the special freedom in this respect which your perfect loyalty thought right to grant me and almost to urge upon me. Such a subject is scarcely suitable for long explanations, and fortunately does not require them. But I must assure you that after having for some months naturally murmured against this necessity, I bless to-day the virtuous passion which has imposed this wholesome abstinence upon me, now become almost easy. The true theory of human nature had for a long time been directing my attention to the powerful efficacy of this restraint, physically, intellectually, and morally. But I had to overcome effectively a strong animal instinct, and this could not be done unless I were deeply animated by a truly pure love. Allow me, my heavenly Clotilde, to thank you on my knees for such a blessing, which will in future strengthen the full activity of my noblest faculties. If, as is doubtless the case, the principal improvements of which we are capable are those of our inner nature and not of our outward condition, you will no longer hesitate, I think, after this summary sketch, to recognise the real sincerity of my deepest gratitude to you.

Farewell, dearest friend, receive with my chaste kisses my special thanks for the sweet time that I have just consecrated to you. As to our loving interview of Saturday, tell me the way which you decide on as most convenient.

Love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 169. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Friday morning, 27 February, 1846

I am just posting a line to you, dear friend, to thank you for your tender anxiety. But do not be anxious about me. I am not anxious about myself. The shock I have undergone this time has been purely physical, but like other shocks, it will do me good. It is very evident that my organs are too delicate now to stand active remedies. I have got over an inflammation which might have carried me off; and I shall keep to the main remedy which suits my chest; as for internal remedies mallow soothes me effectually. My appetite began to return yesterday, and I shall no longer worry a stomach which may still be very useful to me; I am horribly tired and shaken, but that is all.

Come and see me to-morrow, I shall be able to listen. To night, perhaps, I shall be able to sleep. I embrace you affectionately, dear friend, and am much touched by your watchfulness over me.

Yours from my heart

CLOTILDE V.

Letter 170. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Saturday evening, 28 February, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

I must tell you something at once, and I do not quite know how to express it. You are kind enough to offer me a pleasure which appears to me as to you, likely to be most delightful, but besides the reasons which you know me to have for not going now to any social gathering, I have serious reasons for keeping my life ruled as accurately as a sheet of music paper, until I have carried out my work in hand. Until then my rights as an invalid hold good,

and that is all I want. When I am seen not to be going out in the present fine weather, willy nilly, they will have to believe at home that there is something the matter with me ; and at least I thus avoid chatter over my health, my work, and my arrangements. I alone know what patience is required to steer clear of all the shoals I meet with, but that I have, and unless attacked again by physical troubles, which I hope I now know how to keep at bay, I shall not go back from my resolution. I am already so glad to have regained this much of independence that I prize it greatly in spite of some inconveniences ; and then I have had the love of so many people on condition of my loving them only, that I must excuse my family not being above that standard. My feelings for you and about you are well known, and notwithstanding their exceptional nature, perhaps even because of this, there are susceptibilities existing with which I have to reckon. Well, this is a long story about a small worry. But I wanted to warn you in time to avoid your taking any steps about me with regard to the concert.

Léon came to see me, notwithstanding orders against it. However, I am not too shaky this evening. Your kind visit must, it is true, only be counted as balm to my soul, for there must be privileges in favour of such a friend as you.

I hope I shall soon be able to take up my work again. It will certainly be one of pain. If I were to reproduce a single event of my life in it, there would be some justification for taking it as my own history ; but the story is a complete invention, and at all events, that will prevent my mother's suspicions.

Good night, dear friend, and good morning, for this will only be posted to-morrow. A pleasant Sunday to you ; we shall both pass it in much the same way. Let me have news of you and I will send you news of myself. Do not give Sophie too many errands to run, but when there is no reason against her coming, I am always pleased to see her.

Yours most affectionately

CLOTILDE

28 *February*, 1846.

The month in which women talk least. (You will not complain this time of the vagueness of my dating).

Letter 171. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday afternoon, 1 March, 1846

You will easily understand, my beloved, that my intention of devoting the best part of this Sunday to you was already formed before Sophie brought me the affectionate letter which I have just read over again. While awaiting her return I was fulfilling the sweet duty which now consecrates to my heart the first day of each month, by reading over the series of your letters of the previous month. Besides the fulfilment of this regular duty, there were other special reasons to-day for recalling more clearly the dear remembrance of you, if only because of our sweet conversation of yesterday.* Since I left you I keep hearing the peculiar sweetness of your last words just as if you were still speaking. Never had I been so moved by that pure and earnest voice which I have studied so often, in order to assure myself about the strength of your chest. Even if I had not to answer your letter, there would be no want of direct reason for this outpouring of feeling. When going out for her short regular holiday, my good Sophie doubtless left orders with the porter to let no one come up, and if anyone did persist, the bell would ring in vain. Besides, Sunday's postal arrangements leave me no hope of your reading this to-night, so Sophie will bring it to you to-morrow morning before the postman could. I can then with a clear conscience prolong this affectionate converse until the hour of the monthly dinner.

According to Sophie's report, you have not had a good night yet, notwithstanding the pills. I acknowledge with affectionate confidence the special pardon with which you have forestalled my own scruples respecting our pleasant interview yesterday. But I regret that some of the sin of having tired you should fall on your younger brother, who seems to me, notwithstanding his healthy good spirits, more careful in this respect than his elder brother, inasmuch as he is more affectionate. Be more inflexible, dearest friend, in forbidding yourself to callers so long as sleeplessness, feverishness, and loss of appetite continue. Though I am out of anxiety, I cannot but advise continued careful attention until all these three symptoms shall have entirely disappeared. However urgent requests may be, do not attempt to go downstairs before then. So I do not expect to see you to-morrow evening, when I make my weekly visit to your mother. As to our sweet Wednesdays, I hope you will allow me to come, leaving either of us free to

* Image of 28 February, 1846.—*Ed.*

shorten the interview should your health seem to require it. But if there were other reasons for postponing this visit, I would put off the happiness of seeing you till Saturday, reserving to myself the natural compensation for such a deprivation.

On the whole, my Clotilde, as my affection becomes developed, it becomes purer. I learn to enjoy you in yourself and not in myself. To know that you are in every respect quiet and happy constitutes more and more the main satisfaction of my life : even the happiness of helping this only comes after it. As I was telling you yesterday my way of loving you is not only to see in you a future sainted wife, but also actually a noble daughter. Alas ! my dear Clotilde, you do not yet know the degree with which this last image may realise itself to me. You, who so deserve to share the secrets of my heart, you must know, you alone amongst all my friends, that these natural feelings are not quite strange to me. When I was twenty years old I had, or at least I thought I had, by a woman who might have been my mother, a daughter, for whose loss I still weep sometimes, though she was only in her ninth year when an attack of croup took her from me. However doubtful it might be whether I was the father, I had morally accepted, and I honourably fulfilled to the very end all the different duties of this relationship, sufficiently, at least, to be thus early initiated, as far as was possible, into the touching paternal feeling which doubtless had then much to do with my being preserved from the withering of the affections to which theoretical absorption is only too liable. When beginning last year to consecrate my inner life to you, I could not help comparing you with my poor Louise, whose elder you would only have been by three years, and who promised, moreover, to be as gifted as she was beautiful. You see, my incomparable Clotilde, that I shall not require much imagination to love you as a father. It is on you that I concentrate, as is befitting, nearly all the feelings which your sex can inspire by cherishing you at once as wife, sister and daughter. An unjust fate having deprived me of the three orders of affection which are woman's attribute, you have been destined to provide me with them in yourself alone. It only depended on your mother to complete this holy relationship, for my heart, at the instigation of yours, was ready to confer on her a kind of adopted maternity of which, however, she despised the honour and the sweetness. You can now feel, my Clotilde, how indispensable you have become to my whole moral life.

Although the various natural emotions have not failed as much in your case as in mine, and although I can, alas ! scarcely hope ever to inspire you with the most energetic of them all, yet I know that the practical analogy of our respective situations has now disposed you to recognise, at its truly eternal value, our deep mutual sympathies. Let us then allow them a free course, for they will be all the more effective and lasting as they become more pure. My last letter will have sufficiently explained to you how your ennobling ascendancy over me has already freed me from the last necessities inherent to our personal instincts. There is now nothing to interfere with the constant development of this angelic love which by filling the heart tends also to fortify the body and raise the mind. That which mystic theology reserved in an indistinct way for heaven, Humanity will more and more succeed in realising worthily. I promised you to organise the worship of woman, and I hope to live long enough to initiate some higher minds in an institution familiar to me from my own personal trial of it. I cannot venture to describe to you how I now begin each day, for your tenderness is not sufficiently on a level, or at least in tune, with mine, duly to appreciate the regular private effusions, of which I may perhaps venture some day to give you an idea. Oh, that I were, my Clotilde, as much a poet as I am a philosopher ! How much stronger my social action would be ! But while this decisive combination of sublime attributes is certainly impossible to-day, it may possibly be realised at some future time, after those fundamental doctrines shall have been established, whose peaceable and unanimous ascendancy is an indispensable preliminary to full poetic development.

I find, dear friend, that I have been gradually carried away very far from the first special object of this letter, which was intended in the first place to allay your own regret in regard to the musical entertainment I offered you yesterday. But with you I allow myself freedom for any digressions, whether of thought or of feeling, knowing well that they will always be understood and valued. I cannot, however, finish this affectionate conversation without specially pointing out how much I understand and respect the different instinctive motives of your prudent refusal. The stronger our intimate friendship grows, the more I recognise the just and exclusive authority which I freely conferred on you to control all relations between us, you alone being able to appreciate all the proprieties of different kinds. As I had

not yet bought the tickets, I shall save doubly, for I have sufficient knowledge of concerts of this kind not to seek in them a compensation for the deplorable quality of the present musical season. Not only are all programmes more or less deceptive, but this one does not offer me any special interest. Speaking about music, I must not forget the masterpiece offered for last night. This new opera, described as *Buffa*, and on a not very pleasant subject, is very much on a par with the other poor pieces attempted during this wretched Italian season. I think it even inferior to *Don Pasquale*, if I may judge by the first act, beyond which I really could not stand it, though Monsieur Lenoir wished to stay till the end, which must have been very late, as this stupid work is also very prolix. Its strange success in Italy confirms the general opinion of all good judges on the radical decay of musical taste. When that unhappy country shall also have lost this last particular superiority, what will remain to it beyond its memories of the past and its delightful climate?

I thank you warmly for the free confidence which you showed this morning to my kind Sophie, who was much touched by it. This really remarkable woman, who is so fit, in her way, to understand your eminent nature, could not refrain from weeping when speaking of your deep misfortune, and I was not ashamed myself to mingle my tears of sympathy with the pure drops shed by my noble servant. Her candid ingenuousness brought out a touching word, which, by its exquisite delicacy, deserved to be some day immortalised by your pen, when she artlessly expressed her regret that I was not a woman to be able more frequently to bear you company. Nothing could more fully show her firm conviction in the perfect purity which distinguishes our intimacy, than the expression of such a wish. It is not without reason that ill-natured suspicions are often regarded as far more damaging to those who indulge in them than to those against whom they are directed.

Farewell, sweet and tender companion, whom the too often misapplied name of friend cannot satisfactorily describe! You have delightfully filled up the active time of my day of rest until the moment of attending the open monthly dinner party, no attractions of which will make me forget your charming image and your sweet voice. I embrace you heartily as brother, as husband, and as father.

Love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

The small hopes of inheritance of which I spoke to you

yesterday have already vanished. The unfortunate woman has just written to me that according to the explanation and decision of her solicitor she has really no legal right ; for the law is formal on the point that, although a natural child, if legally recognised, is able to inherit from its father and mother, it cannot inherit in their stead. So I am soon relieved from all worry in this matter.

I hope that you will kindly accept the sample of apple jelly which Sophie is bringing you. It is newly made by my grocer, who is usually very successful with it. This kind of dessert seems to me very suitable in your present dietary.

Letter 172. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Monday, 2 March, 1846

MY DEAR FRIEND

Your heart is as sweet as your apple jelly ; and it was not the first time that I myself had had the thought which Sophie expressed to you yesterday. On my side it was not dictated by interest, far otherwise ; for I am well aware of the difference in the friendship between persons of the same sex and of different sexes. But in that case there would have been peace for both, that balm of the soul so hard to find ! However that may be, you are the first in my real affections : at once father and brother to me. Happy those who find a new relationship of this kind under which to continue life ! I get a touch of fever again when I take up this wretched pen, and I should so like to chat with you during the sad time of my enforced idleness. I hope I shall get free of it without having to go again to Monsieur Grandchamp. Yet I was frightened last night at the effect of the fever on my mind. Up to one o'clock I had to resist the impulse to get up and walk about the streets. But an increase of soothing medicines may perhaps fit me for a little rest. My mother has just been. She had been wanting to see me several times. She continues to have the same heart : it has never once in her life beaten for her own sake ; if she were a stranger I should respect her ; I love her and deplore that she cannot see things more clearly. I happened to find myself in a difficulty which made me open myself to her in regard to my treatment. For I had

run short of dressings for my arm ; so she undertook to send them to-morrow well wrapped up, indeed, to bring them to me herself. It gave her as much pleasure to hear this from me as it gave me to tell her. She knows a good deal better than the others how much care my chest requires, and she has always been wanting to bring her doctor to treat me for that.

This morning brought me a letter from my cousin of the 'Quatillard pears.' I am sorry to have to describe her in this way, but I think it is the only one which will bring her to your memory. It was she with whom I was so intimate during the two years which followed my misfortunes. She affords me a good instance, illustrating the difference that I was speaking of at the beginning of this letter. The poor woman tells me that her daughter of fourteen years old is very ill with acute bronchitis after measles. Specialists have been called in, but she seems very uneasy ; indeed, her selfishness has concentrated itself on her children, so I pity her from the bottom of my heart.

In misfortune, when one so much needs love, she is able to speak with words that touch one. I am not one of those whom good fortune makes careless of their real friends.

But, willy nilly, I must leave you, my dear and affectionate benefactor. I should like to end my letter by something more gracious than what I am going to say, but really it is a question of diplomacy. If you were to come on Wednesday and Saturday after all the orders that I have given, and am still giving, about my not being at home to my family, there might be trouble at home. Let us then respect family privileges, and let us enjoy as we best can those of affection. As I end this, I am already somewhat shaky. I feel like Tantalus in the midst of my writing materials and my books. Our only true inheritance in life is experience ; we have nothing but what we receive from her ; unfortunately the legacy comes too late. I was sorry that the one you mentioned came to nothing. THE BAD ARE OFTEN MORE IN NEED OF PITY THAN THE GOOD.*

Farewell, I embrace you affectionately. Have some consideration for your excellent helper's feet : I should be glad to show her some day my regard and my appreciation of her kindness.

Yours from my heart, my dear friend

CLOTILDE

* The Seventh of the Seven Maxims of Clotilde de Vaux.—*Ed.*

Letter 173. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday morning, 4 *March*, 1846 (11 o'clock)

I asked Sophie to tell you to-day, dear friend, how sorry I was yesterday at not being able to answer the kind letter which she had brought me in the morning. It was the day for Monsieur Bonnin's monthly visit, and he arrived so early as to leave me no free time. In consequence of this unfortunate delay, I might doubtless be excused putting off my reply until Sophie's return. But this conversation, though imperfect, affording me the only relief to the yearnings of my heart, I have resolved to write to you now, only closing my letter later on. In consequence of your illness, I have had some return of my nervous symptoms, poor sleep and a tendency to convulsive movements; from which I had been free for the last two months, as I explained to you. Yet I feel that this new disturbance is of quite a different kind, and that it will stop when you have recovered from your present attack; so pay no attention to it unless by so doing you could get well sooner.

When Monsieur Grandchamp saw you yesterday, he probably took firm steps to undo this mischief he had done you. For he must now see that his too violent or too sudden form of treatment was the only cause of the slight intestinal inflammation, and this was fortunately recognised and taken care of in time, thanks to the extreme sensitiveness of your constitution, which gave warning of the disorder in sufficient time to prevent it becoming dangerous. Both you and I have been too blindly respectful to medical prescriptions this time, and I blame myself specially for not having seen the danger of this multiplication of powerful counter-irritants; they certainly seem to me hardly suitable to such a delicate constitution. Though experience, as you so justly say, always produces its fruits too late, I hope I shall profit by this severe lesson so as to be no longer obedient to any medical prescriptions which may appear to me incorrect, at least in your case.

However, the mistake of our doctor only here consisted in an insufficient perception of the peculiar delicacy of your constitution. For his treatment of bronchial troubles by counter-irritant, first through the skin and then through the intestines, is quite sound in itself. When you are free of this accidental attack, I have no doubt that your principal ailment will have been very much benefitted by the shock of this treatment from

its having rather violently drawn the inflammation away from your chest. I once saw a similar result brought about by a natural eruption, which I have mentioned to you ; it is always on the same medical principle, only differing in the manner and the kind of irritant.

But to ensure this happy result it is most necessary for you to carry out your several precautions in your mode of living for a good deal longer than your present attack seems to require. For after such shocks the organism remains for a long time liable to inflammation in its most irritable parts, especially if there also be present some chronic inflammation, which may then take an acute form. The case of acute bronchitis you mention as having come on after measles, should warn you against any imprudence ; for this, after your intestinal attack, might be dangerous to your lungs either from the cold or damp met with on leaving the house too soon, or by prematurely taking up intellectual work, etc. As to diet, our doctor will probably have impressed upon you yesterday the necessity of eating very little, above all at night, and never unless hungry. This treatment is so clearly pointed out by your condition, that if he did not formally order it, that must have been from supposing it evident, according to a too frequent custom of most doctors. Do not be afraid, Clotilde, of becoming weak from want of sufficient nourishment, a prejudice held by your family : there being at present scarcely any expenditure of strength, very little requires renewing, while the least over-allowance of food may at present do you much harm. Even should you become somewhat thin and pale, do not be alarmed by a passing symptom, which would disappear at once, along with the troubles requiring these strict precautions. I hope, dearest friend, that you will excuse my strongly insisting on these points. Besides being constantly in anxiety about your precious health, I am now anxious to make up for the over-confidence which prevented me from putting you on your guard against dangerous medical exaggeration. Allow me, then, my Clotilde, to watch henceforth with more attention and foresight the general course of a treatment which is so important to me.

You should scarcely regret your humorous description of your cousin since I do not know her name, and this description brought her to my mind at once. She has supplied a fresh opportunity of showing unwittingly the excellent qualities of your kind heart, in which the news of misfortune effaces at once the remembrance

of prosperous selfishness. I myself felt something of the same kind on Sunday in regard to the disappointment of a legacy that I mentioned to you. Notwithstanding my very great grievances, my first impulse was to write a line of condolence for this unforeseen disappointment, such was the momentary softening effect it had towards that depraved heart. However, I am glad now that I repressed this dangerous impulse, which seemed incompatible with my prudent system of avoiding any communication with the unhappy woman not strictly necessary.

In ending this rather medical letter, I must not let you think by careless silence that I resented in the slightest degree your refusal to receive me to-day. Pray believe, dear friend, that I understand and respect the very natural motives which prevent you, against your own wish, from granting me at present the privilege which your care of yourself requires you to deny to your own family. Though I fear the competition of no one when it is a matter of loving you, I nevertheless feel your not yet being able to show openly the importance you attach to my affectionate care. You know moreover that my letter of Sunday expressly foresaw the possibility of this painful necessity. I hope, however, that you will allow me to come on Saturday, if the state of your health does not prohibit this. While you rightly have deference as far as desirable for a family susceptibility which, though selfish, is quite excusable, I know that you are not generally disposed blindly to subordinate your conduct to it.

Since your mother took the little medical secret you confided to her so well, I am glad now that you made known to her what you had at first only confided to me. Because, after all, she loves you as much as she can with her unjust illusion and her strange jealousy. But the necessity for mentioning this to her might easily have been avoided if you had entrusted me with the small purchase of dressings, which Sophie would have taken to you without her knowledge.

I have not time, nor perhaps courage enough, to say anything more to-day about that artless remark of Sophie's, to which your unexpected adoption of it attaches an importance of another kind, and even a new meaning, the sweetness of which is not unalloyed with a bitterness which you did not intend. Speaking of Sophie, I read to her this morning the kind words about her at the end of your excellent letter: they were a fit recompense for so pure a devotion.

Farewell, my beloved, I hope that this invaluable helper will bring me better news of a health, the present impairment of which disturbs my own quiet and stops much of the work which I love. Pending the pleasure of our Saturday's interview, if it should come to pass, pray accept tenderly the saintly caresses of my respectful love.

Ate COMTE

P.S.—Sophie's report has just comforted me somewhat. Do not be anxious at your not having seen Monsieur Grandchamp yesterday. He often acts thus in illnesses which he considers trifling. I hope, however, that he will come to-day, and at a convenient hour, but do not wait up for him, and have no hesitation in applying to him a general order against visitors. I have had to do it with him myself. The loss of blood which took place this morning must not make you feel uneasy: on the contrary it is a very favourable symptom. Nevertheless, it indicates the necessity of a rigid increase of precautions in your dietary, physical and mental.

Letter 174. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX

Thursday morning, 5 March, 1846

Indeed, my dear friend, you love me very much. You do things for me which I should never forget if I lived a hundred years. I hope I shall, notwithstanding the present attack: so I must ask you to take care not to injure your health on account of mine. You get more news of me than anyone else; you know that I am a cracked vessel shaken by the slightest trouble; this one, though a rather sharp attack, may yet have some good effect. So do not disturb either your rest or your health on this account.

Nevertheless, I feel rather sore at Monsieur Grandchamp's conduct. It has given me the measure of the man, and I am writing to him this morning in a way which shows what I think of him. I expect him, so far as one can expect anything of him, to attend me to the end of my illness. One thing he may be sure of is that I have no personal liking for him.

If you see him, dear friend, do not speak to him of anything I have said; a serious grievance should be settled direct.

I am very weak ; I took your advice and that of my stomach yesterday, and I ate nothing but my six oysters and a little apple jelly. I have another half-dozen left for this morning, and some bread jelly ; my appetite is at its best then, and the oysters give it a start. Perhaps some white meat broth will do me good. Sophie kindly undertakes to get me some to-day · we shall see. The enemata of marsh mallow bring away each time a great deal of blood and mucus it is this accumulation which has probably been the cause of the mischief. Perhaps when all this is cleared away the fever will leave me, and I shall get back an appetite. I seem to have taken the right way to get well after these various trials.

Farewell, dear friend, I hope I shall be able to see you on Saturday, and that I shall be a little further on the right road. I would willingly give up the glory that you sometimes promise me to get a good night's sleep. I embrace you as I love you, with all my heart.

CLOTILDE

Letter 175. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Thursday afternoon, 5 March, 1846

Your affectionate letter of this morning and Sophie's last report make me feel safe again. I can only compliment you, dear friend, on the wisdom and the firmness with which you manage, almost by yourself, this unexpected attack, setting right, with the help of one sympathetic piece of advice, the slight errors in systematic treatment which were perhaps the causes of its severity. The doctor's neglect deserves all the reproof that you have just sent him, and this dispenses me, according to your wish, from any reproaches when I go to have a talk with him on your present condition. But, however blameworthy his conduct may be morally, I maintain that it shows evidence of his full confidence in the result of an attack which he had foreseen and even brought on, while he did not foresee its severity for want of knowledge of the sensitiveness of your constitution. Although medical materialism has had its usual bad effect on him, he is neither by nature nor even by habit sufficiently hardened to be so neglectful in a disease that he considered really dangerous.

When Sophie was ill, and was getting out of danger, I was myself obliged to go to fetch him once or twice in order to calm the poor woman, who thought herself abandoned as a hopeless case. The imperfection of the usual medical theories, which only take note of the commonest and most evident symptoms causes all our practitioners most irrationally to neglect these serious morbid anxieties, except when in some of them there arises a wiser wisdom of practice, born of natural good feeling, which is very rare among them and almost incompatible with their bustling life. I expect then to hear to-morrow that your well-deserved remonstrance has resulted to-day in a serious and well-timed visit.

I expect Monsieur Grandchamp will then pay especial attention to the intestinal hæmorrhage, which seems to me a very favourable symptom, but worthy of serious consideration as marking the satisfactory result of the revulsive treatment. Provided you never relax your severe dietary, I am sure that there is no direct danger in this direction, while this diversion will soon have the effect of freeing you entirely from any previous congestion. Your very silence in regard to your usual lung troubles leads me to presume that their improvement, which was the principal object of this rough treatment, has already begun to be perceptible.

All this series of news, of thoughts, and of hopes, has had a good effect on the nervous trouble which had returned in consequence of my inevitable anxiety about you. To make your mind quite easy on this point, I need only tell you that I feel myself quite ready to enjoy this evening the sweet music of *la Sonnambula*, music which is always so much in sympathy with my feelings. This sweet old stock-piece will easily make me forget the flatness of last Saturday's new production, one which I fully decided not to hear again.

Besides the various special considerations which tend directly to make me easy about you, I would specially note the lovely sincerity and the sweet resignation which mark the whole of your letter. I am too well aware of your rare candour to fear lest these impressions should only be the result of a loving effort to quiet me. Such attacks are generally very effectual in showing the true moral nature, by rendering its usual disguise more difficult and less important. There are very few people who do not lose something in this decisive trial. You, my beloved, you can only gain by it. The admirable combination of tenderness and nobility

of character which characterises your soul had never shown itself so well, and thus I feel impelled to love you more and more.

How sweet your heartfelt gratitude is to me, little though it be deserved! In my daily round of life I had frequently felt that the least voluntary sacrifice brings forth ample and habitual advantages. Franklin's clever saying is no doubt based on this natural re-action. But you alone, Clotilde, have enabled me fully to appreciate the happy consequences that may at last flow from actions that seem to be sufficiently rewarded already by the inward satisfaction of having performed them. It is especially in the interchange of affection that one sees the essential character of all beautiful exchanges of this kind, in which each one should gain more than he gives.

This would bring me back to the sweet effusions which the simple words that escaped our Sophie on Monday drew from your tender heart. But although I had already put off this charming subject, for which opportunities will always be returning, allow me to put it off again, because I feel that it would draw out to too great length this affectionate conversation, which must end here with the usual expressions of my chaste adoration.

A^{te} COMTE

Although my letter comes to an end very soon after five o'clock, you could not get it by this evening's post. Therefore I shall send it to-morrow morning by Sophie, who will doubtless bring me the happy permission to see you on Saturday, if, as I hope, you still keep better. Yesterday's change of weather is, I think, much in your favour, by removing a very irritating dryness of the air, without however, any danger of giving cold.

Letter 176. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday morning, 8 March, 1846 (11 o'clock)

My visit to you yesterday,* having diminished my anxiety, enables me to-day to try to give you a little distraction from your suffering by returning judiciously to the sweet subject which my anxiety for your health has twice already made me defer since I received the priceless effusions which Sophie's simple wish called out from you on Monday. I hope, my beloved,

* Image of 7 March, 1846.—Ed.

that this delay has in no wise concealed from you my deep gratitude for that tender expression of feeling.

Moreover, the way in which you describe the feelings with which I have the happiness of inspiring you, has also the advantage of pointing out frankly and affectionately their serious though unavoidable deficiencies. Your admirable womanly insight will have felt the natural propriety of this last remark when I put off explanations, which I might at first have feared I could not make without some tinge of bitter feeling. But I have now made up my mind to resign myself to the sad fate by which we are ruled, and I feel myself capable of expressing due gratitude without any admixture of regret.

You deign then, my Clotilde, to see in me henceforth at once a brother and a father! Indeed, that is all I could expect at present, and much more than has been deserved by anything I have yet done. I have now only to make myself fully worthy of this twofold title to which I hope finally to acquire the fullest right. Thus you give me double permission to devote my life to you, as the consequence of an affection which is truly shared. The dignity and reverence implied in one of these bonds, and the sweet equality of the other, thus happily temper one another, so as to constitute the most perfect relationship, always excepting that one which nothing can replace and which in great minds is equal to all other forms of tenderness united. Even from this last point of view, though your heart cannot yet, and alas! perhaps never will, be fully in harmony with mine, the purity of your affection does not prevent me from frankly expressing to you the whole energy of my sanctified passion. Thus ever certain to find in you a loving sister and a tender daughter, allowed moreover to cherish you with all the chaste devotion of a husband, I find myself henceforth provided with an incomparable treasure of feelings of which I had for a long time believed my sad inner life to be for ever deprived. Could I, a year ago, have even hoped for such a prize? In the enjoyment of such unexpected happiness, how can I deplore its imperfect reciprocity? We are thus, noble and tender Clotilde, irrevocably united by a holy affection, which I feel will be more and more strengthened by the constant purity which you alone have brought me to know and to appreciate! This powerful mutual effort will enable us to struggle honourably against all external difficulties, when any fear for your health shall have finally disappeared. Sad experience has recently taught

me how little I must count upon most of my pretended friends, but I have as a priceless compensation now acquired a sincere and devoted friend who, of her own accord, becomes my daughter and sister. How then could I complain of my lot?

To this tender personal explanation the charming passage to which I am so late in replying attached a happy general appreciation of the sexual conditions of true friendship. I need scarcely tell you how very completely we agree on this point since the consideration of it constitutes one of the necessary foundations of my philosophic theory of marriage in the special little work which I had the pleasure of dedicating to you two months ago. My own experience has only too well taught me that friendship between men, though apparently firmer and less imperfect, is really not much more satisfactory than that between women, for the same ever-present reason, the inevitable risk of rivalry. Nevertheless, to complete this appreciation of the difference of sex as the first necessary condition of perfect friendship, we must, I think, add another condition, that one of them should be inspired by real love, approved, though not shared, by the other. For on one hand such a friendship could not exist between hearts of which the affections were placed elsewhere; on the other hand it would be very lukewarm, very precarious even, if both were sexually free. I shall be glad if your clear mind would take this summary view into consideration as soon as the state of your health no longer forbids your thinking out abstract and consecutive questions. The usual hour for Sophie to go to you is drawing near, and I particularly wish that she should take this letter, the subject of which can be taken up whenever convenient, as it will always be ready for discussion between us. Farewell my adorable friend. Accept, as they are meant, the affectionate kisses to which our several relationships entitle you.

A^{te} COMTE

Out of due respect for the susceptibilities of your family I will maintain as far as necessary the painful effort of restricting our interviews to Saturdays only. But you know how greatly I shall be wishing to come and see you whenever you think fit.

Do not forget, dear friend, your sisterly promise to avail yourself of my good Sophie's services for as long a time as she

can be useful to you ; and have no fear that my digestion, now quite right again, will run any danger at a restaurant.

I hope also that you will not hesitate to ask me as a daughter for anything that you want, without waiting to be in actual need. It is unnecessary to tell you that I shall always be glad for you to do so.

*Letter 177. From CLOTILDE DE VAUX**

Sunday, 8 March, 1846

DEAR FRIEND

Here is all that remains of my strength, most of which I had meant to keep for you. Our good Sophie had the first part of it, and she will have told you of the strength of mind I showed about the *roses* ; I shall do very well by partly substituting rice water and quince.

I have been wanting for a long time to talk to you about yourself, and yesterday I hoped to have had strength enough to speak : but it seems to be fated that, notwithstanding all the affection that I have for you, the high tension of your mind obliges me to fall back on my pen.

Dear friend, your affection makes me very happy, and sometimes very thoughtful. I cannot help thinking that some day you may reproach me with these violent distractions affecting your public life ; you convert a bond which should be all sweetness into a kind of fiery astringent, which wastes your time and your thought, and only does me harm. . . . You make a mistake when you say that there is no love in friendship : I have never dared to be myself with you (and do not attribute this to the common or coarse causes which you formerly supposed). When I say *dared* it is the exact word I mean. If we could both talk calmly I would prove to you that friendship can be loving and brave ; that is why I honour our attachment by all the sweetest and holiest names I can find, thus to enable it to make a place for me along with you at your fireside. All this requires to be worked out, and I promise you that I will set about it as soon as I can. I shall have a great deal to go through during the next two days : I can only hope I shall be better afterwards. I have many kind things to say to you, but I must stop for to-day.

Be assured of my eternal affection.

* Her last letter.—*Ed.*

Letter 178. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Monday afternoon, 9 *March*, 1846 (5 o'clock)

DEAR AND ESTEEMED FRIEND

I cannot just yet reply fully to the deeply affectionate letter, albeit somewhat mysterious, that our good Sophie has just brought me. But as to the commission you gave her for Monsieur Grandchamp, I may tell you at once from her that the doctor doubts whether he can go to see you to-day, being urgently called on to make an amputation. So do not expect him this evening; at least do not put off going to bed, though his visit, scarcely probable, is however possible. The symptom about which you wish to speak to him does not seem to me one to give any anxiety, and at all events a slight delay would not interfere with the doctor's taking note of it. I think you have acted judiciously in this, as well as in regard to the confection of roses. Farewell, my Clotilde.

Love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

On Saturday I was somewhat upset, but yesterday and to-day I have not had a single convulsive attack.

Letter 179. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday evening, 11 *March*, 1846

The news our good Sophie brought me this morning somewhat alleviates the serious anxiety I had yesterday. I am especially glad, dear friend, to know that you are not failing in resignation and calmness, for these will do much to bring about and hasten your recovery. Though I at first regretted your rather precipitate though very natural dismissal of Monsieur Grandchamp, I now see how wise is your new determination. Your again calling in the doctor who knows your constitution, and whose faults even are of value in preserving you from any violent treatment, gives us some confidence now that the revulsive attack to which he had formerly been rather indifferent is in its full course. His yesterday's prescriptions seemed to me very reasonable. You know that I thought an entire abstinence from food was absolutely necessary, and I was surprised that the other doctor did not see this. The drink now ordered is also of the light nutritive character which will

tend to satisfy any craving of the stomach while intestinal irritation is going on. The kind and attentive character of this young doctor is, moreover, better suited to your constitution, and even to your present state, which requires assiduous care rather than strong treatment. His relations towards your family also give you reason to feel yourself safe with him, especially as he is naturally in a position to enlighten your relatives on the real severity of this attack, for I have learnt that your brothers have treated it with a lightness which I could hardly have imagined. In any case I shall watch the course of your treatment, whoever be the doctor, sympathetically, but without any blind deference : I am earnestly reading over my Broussais in regard to a case of one so dear to me, and with regret that I had at first subordinated my own judgment too much to that of Monsieur Grandchamp.

Since by Sophie's report you were well enough to read a little, I think I might, my beloved, come back to the subject of your precious letter of Sunday, about which I have not yet been able to speak as I should wish. I shall, however, confine myself to two points which alone seem clear enough already, without beginning an ill-timed disquisition, perceived by yourself to require certain developments which the state of your health forbids my bringing forward prematurely.

To begin with, I am deeply touched by the delicate feeling which marks your tender anxiety about the disturbance which you think my noble passion for you has brought into my public life. But far from ever having to look back with any regret upon this unconscious influence, be assured, my Clotilde, that it will always call forth my sincerest blessings on you. You surely cannot have taken my frequent declarations on this point as mere ingenious compliments or loving illusions. A steady conviction abides with me, that to become a perfect philosopher I needed before anything a passion both deep and pure, which should make me understand the affective aspect of Humanity. The full consideration of this, only incidental in my first great work, must, on the contrary, now dominate my second work. This final evolution is still more necessary to me now than was, eight or ten years ago, the development of all my artistic tastes.

The great nervous crisis inevitable at the beginning of this holy love no doubt delayed for a short time the direct execution of my philosophic enterprise. But you cannot, dear angel, feel as I do, how much the general conception of this work has thus

become inherently improved. If you did but know the progress I have made during the past year, in the midst of apparent disturbances, towards the principal object of my philosophy, the final systematisation of the whole of human life round its true universal centre of affection! Now that I am sufficiently accustomed to this new order of things, the execution of the work will soon, in its turn, show the happy cerebral influence which had at first been confined to intellectual conceptions. I have especially to establish the fact, in spite of deep-rooted prejudices, that true Positivism surpasses any other religion quite as much in moral efficacy as in intellectual grasp. There is no doubt that nothing can fit me better for such a mission than a deep personal culture of the noblest and tenderest feelings by the daily chaste worship of a beautiful soul.

No one, not even yourself, could as yet fully appreciate the outward results of a passion still so recent that its principal influence has hitherto been internal. But when my inevitable anxiety about your health shall have been sufficiently allayed, the ascendancy of your soul will show its permanent influence on a work so dear to me. Far from my private happiness infringing upon my public life, never have these two aspects of my life been brought into such perfect harmony. You will, in due course, certainly recognise the deep truth of my foresight in regard to this happy and most natural connection, of which I had, and was able to point out to you, the distinct presentiment from the very beginning of my absorbing love for you.

As to the moral side of this influence, you ought to be able by this time to understand the great increase of energy poured into me by this noble attachment, enabling me to sustain unmoved the struggles inherent to my situation, both in private and in public life. In this respect there was a great gain in the inevitable event four years ago, by which I at last gained domestic peace, without which I could never have borne calmly such serious personal shocks. But if I have to enter on new struggles I shall certainly feel myself stronger, since my heart daily enjoys, as far as possible under the fatal conditions we share, the consolations of which my soul had not hitherto had the slightest idea. Away then, my Clotilde, with these scruples which, however noble they be, however they may increase the worship you deserve, diminish the happiness you should draw from our attachment. I have daily a deep conviction that it is to my love that I owe

important improvements, not only in my feelings and in my character, but also in my principal intellectual conceptions, and even, as I showed you recently, in my various personal habits, physical and moral.

When beginning this inexhaustible subject, I expected to be able to talk afterwards about your unfortunate disposition to hold back any innocent demonstrations of your holy affection, in consequence of what you call my excitement. But this remonstrance will find a fitter place in the communications which I have said you may shortly expect. I shall confine myself then to-day to recommending you on this point always to give the fullest play to your feelings.

After my anxiety about your health, the great cause of disturbance in me is the fear of your insufficient confidence in my steady command over myself. Dare then, Clotilde, in your own happy words, to be always yourself with me; it will be much better for both of us. Do not be afraid that I should mistake demonstrations of friendship for those of love: I am now well prepared against such a mistake. If ever I should inspire you with feelings of the same nature as mine, you might boldly show them without any danger. Perhaps even then the various circumstances of our unfortunate position would require each of us always to maintain by virtuous prudence, the same chastity of conduct dictated at present by the involuntary defect in your feelings and the restraining scruples of mine. But if, after calm and conscientious consideration, this restraint is found to be necessary, be assured, my Clotilde, that I should show myself able to support with never failing strength this new trial imposed upon me by fate, although this would not prevent me from tasting freely the unspeakable sweetness promised then to the full union of our hearts; amongst all the benefits I owe to you, do not, my beloved, think little of the one by which you have made me at last understand the true value of purity, which, supposing this, alas! too improbable state of things should ever come about, would derive from our mutual exercise of restraint an incomparable increase of nobility.

I end this sweet converse with regret, though I fear to tire you by it. I beg you specially to excuse its unintended extension, since this day of happy private converse with you is that on which you usually make your sweet weekly visit, the bitter privation of which I thus feel less acutely. Let us hope

that at least you will not be obliged to deprive me also of Saturday's interview, when this letter may perhaps induce you to give free play to your feelings. Farewell noble sister, farewell dear daughter.

Eternal love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Sophie, in handing you this, will be able to assure you that I am quite well, notwithstanding her very natural anxiety. The restless state in which you saw me on Saturday has now passed off. I may even say that I have become stronger from the greater and greater need of having to do without personal help.

I thank you for having at last accepted all the kind help our precious Sophie can give you. If it is necessary that, after passing a night with you, she should stay also for a great part of the day, do not let any thoughtful consideration for me prevent you from availing yourself of her services. Everything must give way to the care necessary for your speedy restoration to health. I could very easily manage to do without her in the morning by having some soup made the day before and warming it up myself on a fire previously laid.

Not being in a good frame of mind, as you may well imagine, to enjoy the Italian Opera to-morrow, even if they were not acting a wretched buffoonery, I enclose a ticket for your father, along with the equally bad libretto of this insignificant new opera.

Letter 180. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Tuesday evening, 17 March, 1846

According to your welcome wish, dearest friend, Sophie now brings you the more valuable of my two extra watches. It is the only token remaining to me of my dear mother, and I even had some trouble in getting it. For you only in the world would I part with it. But in letting you have it for as long as ever you require it, I shall in no wise feel myself deprived of it. I shall even be glad to connect this cherished token with the supreme affection of my heart. Nevertheless, I have some fear that the practical utility of this time-piece will scarcely be up to the level of the feeling that I have for it; so I think it well to send with it in case

of need my other keepsake, one of much less value, but of well-tested accuracy. It was the first gold watch I had, and it served me faithfully for fifteen years ; you can send it back to me if the other goes well.

Since you are well enough to be able to take soup, I hope you will be able to digest this note also, provided I do not make it much longer. I therefore refrain from describing the intense happiness I felt on this improvement, as it will soon afford you, by the radical improvement of the health you had hitherto enjoyed, the well deserved compensation for so much suffering and danger. However great be my desire to see you soon again, I must scrupulously obey your loving orders, and I may even beg you not to relax them too suddenly, so long as you fear that an interview may possibly upset you too much. We might, however, hasten it a little without danger when you are well enough, if you like, instead of conversing, to hear me read.

Farewell, my Clotilde, you on whom all my affection is eternally concentrated still more so by this painful attack ; receive affectionately the caresses, both fatherly and brotherly, which my heart sends to you.

A^{te} COMTE

Letter 181. From AUGUSTE COMTE

Wednesday, 18 March, 1846

Since you are beginning, dear friend, to be at last out of danger, I wish to celebrate this new lease of life so ardently desired by consecrating specially to you the day usually reserved for the precious weekly visit, of which I have been so painfully deprived for the last month. This loving occupation, the only one allowed me by your present condition, must afford me the compensation I deserve for the cruel anxiety which has of late absorbed me. I shall not send you this until you have of your own accord begun to read a little again without any bad effect. Notwithstanding this delay, dictated by prudence, and not, I hope, to last long, a conversation of this kind will be most appropriate for discussion, as its subject will long remain before us. I shall thus be able to-day to enjoy the sweet inward effect of this sad outpouring of my soul without fear of causing you any disturbance incompatible with the scrupulous care of every kind now necessary for your recovery.

Poetry, ancient poetry especially, was too fond of singing the unworthy pleasure felt by the selfish man in looking on at others struggling against a danger from which he is himself safe. But loving souls will always find true satisfaction in thinking of the perils from which those dear to them have just escaped. These impressions tend directly to strengthen mutual ties by recalling the trials and the evidence necessary for the better testing of the sincerity and the depth of the affection of one for another. I will not, however, attempt to describe my intense anxiety of last week whilst I felt the best part of myself endangered. During that time the only occupation in which I willingly engaged was the sad but absorbing perusal of medical books, from which I could obtain some hope and some light on your condition. Everything else that I did, including the trifling habits of daily life, naturally assumed a relation in regard to you, and I love to keep this habit up even after my principal anxiety has ended so happily.

Tired with these painful readings, which sometimes increased my anxiety instead of allaying it, I tried to distract myself by reading the interesting *Memoirs of Madame Roland*, which I had nearly forgotten since the time of my youth. In these also I was reminded of my Clotilde, and in a way still more apt to make me feel acutely the possibility of misfortune. This distinguished victim of a bloodthirsty crisis could not but remind me of the loyal and high-minded characteristics which I have found in you; but it was in a way which pointed out to me how much the purity and nobility of your generous convictions on social matters were superior to the ardent motives of pride and ambition which specially inspired her. When you read her story, this comparison will not seem to you in any wise exaggerated.

Nothing, then, could turn my thoughts away from you, and indeed I did not seek to do so, however much pain was caused me by dwelling upon your beloved image. In the midst of the cruellest torments which can arise from love, I never ceased to feel that the essential condition of happiness is always to have one's heart filled by a worthy object. If ever I had to undergo the awful loss from which I have now escaped, my duty in every respect, even towards you, would certainly oblige me to go on living after you, even if it were only to show what you were. But since my heart has become accustomed

to the holy feelings of which I owe the rise to you, I fear lest I might no longer be able to endure the sad isolation in which you found me. If I did have that strength it could at least only arise from an irrevocable consecration of my whole soul to the exclusive worship of you, as I should for ever remember you, scrupulously maintaining towards your memory the constancy and the fidelity which I have freely vowed to you.

This painful crisis has given rise in other respects to some thoughts of which I must now give you a short account, on the fatal inequality of our respective feelings.

Led thus to examine more fully the actual conditions of our chaste intimacy, I have been able to understand better how necessary it is for delicate souls to have such a perfect harmony of affection as shall save either from the daily grief of not being able to give back fully as much as it receives. While confirming the pure character of our relations, our recent explanations had inspired me, during these last few days, with the fleeting hope of obtaining at last this necessary habitual equivalence in the exchange of affection, by bringing my own feelings down to the simple degree above which yours have not hitherto been able to rise. The true fundamental nature of my unconquerable affection was thus for a moment disguised under the double form of brotherhood and fatherhood, with which it was happily mixed. To this your full and free approval had just given an apparent ascendancy, but it was really incompatible with the state of my feelings.

This generous illusion had even inspired me with some idea of a legal adoption, which would, by allowing you openly to take my name and home, have obliged me frankly to give up all future hope of a more complete union. I am not sorry to have thought of this, even though the idea was premature, for we may be able to find in it an important consolation, if the involuntary shortcomings of your feelings become unfortunately irrevocable during the two years that I am now short of the age at which I could legally adopt. But our present situation must leave free play to the preponderating influence of feeling while going through the stage of a kind of mental fatherhood and moral brotherhood, which, however true in itself, is but a part of a deeper feeling. It is important above everything never to ignore nor to hide our real feelings for one another, as these will be absolutely blameless on both sides.

Any attempt to hide this fatal difference of feeling would not only be vain but would soon tend to impair radically the confidence or the intimacy necessary to our habitual relations to one another. Certain as I am never to feel anything that I could not frankly own, I am no more bound to attenuate my feelings for you than you are to exaggerate yours towards me. Now, as last July, *I see in you in the actual present a perfect friend, and in my dreams for the future a sainted wife*. I do not appreciate any the less the sweet daughterly and sisterly feelings with which you are good enough to look upon me, since they express the greatest degree of feeling of which your heart is at present capable. But if, while responding to your feelings, my own reach beyond them, why should I in vain try to hide a fuller degree of love? So long as this involuntary inequality of feeling shall exist, do not let us attempt to pretend it does not exist, even were it always destined to do so. In returning your priceless affection with delight, as father and as brother, allow me frankly to cherish you also as lover and husband, since these relations include, in my eyes, all the others. While remaining thus perfectly open, our exceptional intimate relations do not remain any the less pure and even their necessary sanctity is raised still higher by my habitual resignation to the inevitable.

Farewell, then, incomparable Clotilde, accept freely my whole heart, which you alone have fully been able to conquer. While embracing you as a high-minded sister and a tender daughter, I must also adore you chastely as an honoured wife, for whom the involuntary inequality of affection between us will never lessen the natural fulness of my irrevocable devotion.

Eternal love and respect

A^{te} COMTE

Friday morning, 20 March

The certainty I shared with you of your speedy restoration to health made me hope yesterday that I should be able fully to enjoy the last performance of *Il Barbiere*. But the change of feeling was doubtless yet too sudden; for it caused me real suffering instead of a happy diversion. I could not stay till the second act, and notwithstanding the admirable perfection of the first, I was impatiently waiting for it to end, so as to be able to rush away from the stall in which I had just been attacked again by a

nervous fit which certainly would not have returned if I had as usual passed the evening in contemplation of you at my fireside. Though for the last ten days I have never ceased seeing you on your bed of pain, this sad image had never so painfully moved me as when it attacked me with renewed vigour in the midst of this inopportune amusement. To-day, the only remembrance I have of the evening is the sad one of a sort of involuntary profanation, after which I almost feel driven simply to own my fault and to obtain your special forgiveness for it. Perhaps a more tender or tragic form of music would not have shocked me so much. Nevertheless, I do not want to expose myself again to it to-morrow, and I have already decided to give away my two seats, even should *Othello* be played; at least yesterday I had not the pain of seeing the stall I intended for you remain empty. Alas! it has not been often occupied by you. If your improvement is maintained I may be able next week to take advantage of the last two days of the present subscription season.

Friday evening, 20 March

Our happy interview of this morning* leads me, my beloved, to hope I am doing nothing rash in putting an end to the delay in sending you this long letter, although you have not yet resumed any kind of reading. Our excellent Sophie will, moreover, take care to tell you that there is nothing urgent in it and to beg you to put off reading it until to-morrow, so as to prevent any risk of disturbing your night's rest. May this simple outpouring of my heart divert you from your troubles as much as it has allayed my sorrow! But I should be very sorry if it should now cause you to make the least effort to answer it. It is enough that your touching affection freely allows me to hope that Sunday will bring me an order as sweet as the one which gave me so delightful a surprise to-day.

The behaviour of your mother towards me touches me deeply. This morning I almost wished to thank her for it on my knees instead of receiving from her the affecting expression of gratitude which she thought due to me.

By a curious exception your father will hear to-morrow the second acts of both *S. miramis* and *Cinderella*. Though the libretto be hardly in harmony with the music, I enclose that of the one which I happen to have.

* Image of 20 March, 1846.—Ed.

Farewell again, my eternal companion : to-day you caused me to feel deeply the great value and the noble purity of our intimacy, which permitted me, in the presence of your mother, to hold your hand affectionately in mine while I gazed on that angelic face, the sweet beauty of which was rendered still more touching by the passing effect of illness.

THE TWELVE SAINT CLOTILDES
OF AUGUSTE COMTE



FIRST SAINT CLOTILDE
LETTER ON SOCIAL COMMEMORATION

Philosophical Letter on Social Commemoration

COMPOSED FOR MADAME CLOTILDE DE VAUX ON THE OCCASION OF
HER *Fête* BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *Positive Philosophy*

Paris, Monday, 2 June, 1845

MADAME

I attach great importance to being considered by you as not less free from irreligious or metaphysical prejudices than from purely theological ones. As a fact, this has long been my position. But perceiving lately that you still had grave doubts on the subject, I secretly promised myself that I would take advantage of a happy anniversary to remove them. To-morrow is the festival of St. Clotilde, your patron saint: permit me then, Madame, following a touching and universal custom, to join your family in offering you, in my own way, a special mark of affectionate remembrance. The general reflections which this highly-prized occasion leads me briefly to lay before you, will, I hope, enable you to form just ideas as to the eminently social character of a philosophy which, though you may not as yet have directly examined it, has for some time past been much talked about in your circle.

The instinct of Sociability, or the habitual consciousness of the bond uniting each individual to his kind, would be very imperfectly developed were this bond limited to the Present, as it is in the more sociable animals, to the exclusion of the Past and even of the Future. It is the continuous co-operation of successive generations which specially characterises Human Society, and this co-operation is the primary source of the evolution peculiar to our species. Thus the several social states have produced, each in its own way, some special and permanent

institution or institutions, at first spontaneous, but gradually becoming more and more systematic, peculiarly calculated to mark this connection, by linking its own time to previous ones by a regulated veneration for its ancestors, both of the state and of the family. Antiquity had at its disposal powerful resources in this respect, in harmony with the nature of its opinions and the character of its civilisation. This cherishing of memories often became intensified till it reached the point of apotheosis, which it would be most unjust to judge solely by its monstrous abuse in decaying paganism. Still, its efficacy could only be really great during its earliest ages, nor could it be extended to the lower castes, owing to the immovable and aristocratic spirit of all the ancient societies. All the higher divine offices having been promptly filled up in the first organisation of polytheism, the newer gods, without special department, whom official gratitude elevated in numbers to that rank, could seldom be of any real importance, even when some ancient office was broken up and divided amongst them.

When monotheism, acting in the spirit of its doctrine, substituted a simple beatification for the apotheosis of antiquity, it, especially in its Christian form, introduced a real and great improvement into this essential part of every social organisation. Although this necessary substitution was a less powerful stimulant to the personal desires of a glorious immortality, yet by throwing this prize open to all ranks, the field of those desires was greatly widened. For instance, you are aware, Madame, that both your noble namesake and her humble contemporary, St. Genevieve of Nanterre, became almost simultaneously the objects of a worship, to say the least, equal. This extension to all of the principle of consecration enabled Catholicism, long the chief organ of social progress, to introduce a great improvement in this direction by connecting private with public life. The institution, too little understood, of baptismal names, offered to each one, not merely the free choice of a special patron, but also a noble model for personal imitation. If, in the inevitable decay of theological beliefs, it has gradually lost the first of these privileges, nothing can ever deprive it of the second. Springing from the very essence of our nature, it will promptly reappear under inspirations both more systematic and more durable, as soon as the reorganisation of man's principles and feelings shall have put an end to the deplorable anarchy which marks our times.

This philosophic letter, Madame, would degenerate into a very misplaced treatise were I to develop more fully the preceding hints. But these are sufficient to enable your rare sagacity to see, without going into detail, how it is that the positive philosophy fully justifies this Catholic worship of saints, viz., by referring it to its social purpose, fulfilled under Catholicism in forms adapted to that stage of Humanity. Never will it be otherwise than a highly social custom to celebrate periodically the memory of our worthy predecessors, as to enjoin formally on each of us the adoption of some one of them as a model for our own conduct. True philosophers justly deplore, in this respect as in so many others, the discredit into which these useful practices have fallen, from their being unfortunately considered inseparable from doctrines destined to perish as a consequence of their proved incompatibility with the continuous development of our intelligence and of our social instincts.

As to the special case which has led me, Madame, to point out to you these general views, I could not wish for one better calculated to confirm them. In the days of its decline, Christianity, as Paganism before it, though in a much less degree, often abused the high office of public consecration which had fallen to it. But the remark in no way applies to your ancient patroness, who is in every point one of the best examples of Catholic canonisation. The Roman Church was right in looking on the conversion of Clovis as more influential than that of any other royal personage except Constantine, in reference to the social development, not merely of France, but of the whole of the Western Republic. Now that the gentle influence of the amiable Clotilde aided the high political reasons which determined that great event is incontestable; her long and peaceful widowhood was no less nobly devoted to moderating the fierce quarrels of her sons. Such a consecration merited by so many eminent qualities, moral rather than intellectual, constitutes in my opinion one of the types best calculated to set forth the permanent social office of woman—the moralisation of the spontaneous government of material force by the intervention of feeling. Do not then be surprised, Madame, that I can, in my own way, cordially join with all those who, under whatever forms, will celebrate to-morrow this interesting memory; no one, I venture to say, will appreciate it more thoroughly than I shall. When the new School of Philosophy shall accomplish the enlightened mission and systematic rectification of the Roman Catholic

Caendar, your beloved namesake will find a recognition of her eternal claims to the gratitude of Humanity.

In general, Madame, be assured that the essentially Positive Philosophy of the nineteenth century does not come to destroy, as the purely negative philosophy of the last century was compelled to do. Its object is always to construct, as the final outcome of all previous labours, an order at once firm and progressive, in fullest conformity with the whole of our nature, personal and social. When its relative spirit and its organic tendency are sufficiently known to you, you will understand this admirable superiority which enables it, for the first time in history, to combine in one harmonious and homogeneous doctrine all that the different previous states of man have offered of grand or of useful. Everywhere it separates the permanent office which constituted the fundamental purpose of each institution, from the provisional forms which, in their turn, corresponded and must correspond to the different ages of Humanity, thus bringing to light in each case the final mode which will henceforth prevail without disguise. In a word, this new philosophy alone fully represents the collective existence of our species. The destined progress of that species is its peculiar subject, one that no theology, and still less any metaphysical system, could embrace. Until now, in fact, the various religions have had nothing higher than a purely personal end to set before each man, viz., eternal salvation, in which society at large had no part, except as a means, or at best as a condition, without any progressive destination peculiar to itself as a collective existence. Still, during the long infancy of Humanity, the wisdom of the priesthood, the expression of the instinct of mankind, made its imperfect constructions of great use socially, in a way that Positivism explains and defines. But such uses being only provisional, although indispensable, could not preserve these constructions from the irrevocable discredit into which they gradually fell, as the progress of the human evolution undermined at once the respect they had previously commanded from the intellect and their moral influence. The names in use, which yet recall their former power to bind together our ideas and our feelings, now seem, as applied to theological beliefs, only to convey ideas of bitter irony. For during the last three centuries at least, far from tending to unite men, these beliefs have obviously degenerated into the most fertile sources of divergences, private as well as public. This degeneration has

followed, first, from their diminished power of protecting those social truths of which they were the confused expression, and secondly, from their inherent tendency to develop almost infinite divergence, henceforth incompatible with any permanent system of active convictions.

Do not doubt then, Madame, that when real conceptions have become sufficiently general, and daily they gain ground, they will be found better adapted to all noble human purposes than any chimerical ones. With regard to the important subject touched on in this letter, there is indisputably a spontaneous tendency in Positivism to honour every kind of nobility of character, by a sound appreciation of the part each has taken in the fundamental evolution of Humanity. When our modern habits and feelings shall have had time to develop themselves fully on the basis of right principles, the system of commemoration will be found to have made as great a stride towards general perfection as that accomplished by the substitution of Catholicism for polytheism. For the Catholic régime was at once too absolute and too narrow ever to fulfil satisfactorily this great social office. All that had existed before it, and all that it could not embrace was included by it in a blind reprobation. Even within its own bosom it could not embrace those types of character which had not been foreseen and accepted by its unalterable formulæ. To give an instance, have you never noticed, with surprise and indignation, the strange omission from our theological calendars of the heroic maiden who saved France in the fifteenth century?

The more thoroughly you examine this great subject, the more convinced will you become, Madame, that the régime of the new philosophy is the only one which can simultaneously pay honour to all ages, all places, all social conditions, all forms of co-operation, private as well as public, giving strength and vigour to the sense of human continuity, it will enlarge the sphere of its influence and raise the character of that influence by an habitual consideration of the future—a conception the previous régime was unable to take in, from its ignorance of the general law of social progress. The worship of the dead will become even more popular than under Catholicism; for the humblest co-operator will have his part in the sum of an universal convergence, and this to the exclusion of all the ungrounded distinctions between public and private spheres. Every really honourable life may lawfully aspire to some

solemn commemoration, whether in the bosom of his family, in his city, the state, his nation, or finally, by the whole race.

From whatever point we look at it, what spirit can be more social, Madame, than the spirit of thorough Positivism; for it alone embraces the whole of man's existence, individual and collective? The three co-existent modes of our existence: Thought, Feeling, and Action, are therein directly harmonised to the fullest possible extent, by a principle equally applicable to the individual and to the race. They are respectively the subjects of our three great and continuous creations: Philosophy, Poetry, and Politics. The first, Philosophy, accomplishes the direct systematisation of human existence, by establishing, between all forms of thought, a fundamental correspondence, the basis of the social order. The second, Poetry, gives beauty and dignity to that existence by the highest idealisation of our various sentiments. Lastly, the social art of Politics, of which morals constitute the principal branch, determines all our actions, public and private. Such is the thorough solidarity between the three great aspects of human life, the speculative, the affective, and the active, as represented by Positivism. It regards our existence, whether individual or collective, as having for its constant object the universal amelioration in the first place of our external conditions, and then of our own nature, physical, intellectual, but above all, moral.

My letter, Madame, is already very long, but I cannot end it without inviting your attention to the peculiar attraction which this new philosophy, when sufficiently known, must have for your sex.

The Positive School of Philosophy places the spiritual reorganisation in the first rank of importance, abandoning altogether, therefore, all fruitless political agitation. It will secure a preference for the direct regeneration of opinions and morals, over that of mere institutions, the construction of which can only be the consequence, not the cause, of the spiritual change. Now such a radical transformation of the present useless discussions, would assuredly be very favourable to the influence of women, whether we consider the laws of their own nature, or of the general order. The intervention of woman, introduced in so noble a form by the Middle Ages, seems to have nearly died out with them. Now the individual instances of rebellion against a really fundamental order which our modern theories occasion, are but

ill-calculated to resuscitate this indispensable influence. The spiritual system of Positivism can alone now rightly develop it. Instead of cherishing vain longings for the past, your sex should see in it simply a kind of historical foreshadowing of the higher office which must be its lot in the true human future. For, in the steady course of human progress, moral influences become more and more predominant over material forces. And the connection between the spiritual influences—the moral and the intellectual—has always secured the sympathies of woman for the mental advance of Humanity in each of its several stages. In fact, this connection was evident at the very first systematic manifestation of the positive philosophy, arising under the powerful impulse of Descartes, which met with such a ready welcome from your sex. The ladies of the nineteenth century will not fall short of their predecessors, when this philosophy, which in Descartes' time was in nowise social, has reached its full maturity. From this time forward its principal domain will lie precisely among those subjects which by their nature occupy continually the first place in the affections of your sex and the thoughts of my own.

In the daily conflict of forces which sets human affairs in motion, women are, from their peculiarly affective organisation, habitually disposed to second the moral influence exerted by the speculative over the active power. Their peculiar social position, as passive, yet by no means indifferent, spectators of the practical movement, of itself constitutes them the close allies of each spiritual power as against the temporal power of the period. Now this natural affinity will be more powerfully developed by the new moral régime to which our modern societies tend, than by the ancient one. How then will it be possible for your sex to refuse its adherence to a doctrine which makes the adoration of woman a necessity? The noble chivalry of the Middle Ages, hampered as it was by theological beliefs, was never able to raise this worship above the second rank. When the chivalry of modern times shall have attained its true character, it is before woman only that man will bend the knee.

I trust that the importance of these general indications will be my excuse for their length, both before the tribunal of your understanding and of your heart. They will at least attain their chief end by saving you the trouble of studying long treatises in order to gain a better knowledge of the philosophic and social

teachings of the new school. Though the offspring of the French revolution, you see that it differs profoundly from all purely revolutionary schools. These are still seeking to destroy, not to build up, unaware that the needful clearance of rubbish has long since been accomplished. The positive doctrine is more radically opposed to any back-liding towards theology than any metaphysical influence. But this opposition is rather an accessory than a principal object, and it pursues it by offering a more perfect satisfaction of all the requirements, intellectual and social, which invested the earlier régime with its power, while it explains with equal facility the rise and fall of that power.

Henceforward the memory of your gentle patron saint will be yet more dear to me. I shall owe to it a much-prized occasion of bringing home to your feelings the moral strength of Positivism. You see that, steering clear of all foolish eclecticism, the new universal régime gathers round it whatever of noble or useful is to be found in the previous ages of Humanity. But it wisely lets drop those passing forms which, indispensable as they were as the bases of the institutions of the time, afterwards lost their social power. It is this social power which the new school is constantly strengthening and perfecting.

Be pleased, Madame, graciously to accept the sincere wishes which are this day offered with especial fervour by

Your respectful friend

AUGUSTE COMTE

SECOND SAINT CLOTILDE

DEDICATION TO THE POSITIVE POLITY

(WRITTEN IN 1846)

SUPPLEMENTED BY ITS CONCLUDING INVOCATION

(WRITTEN IN 1854)

Dedication

TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF MY ETERNAL FRIEND
MADAME CLOTILDE DE VAUX (*née* MARIE)

Who died in my presence, the 5th of April, 1846,
at the beginning of her Thirty-Second year

*Oh, nostra vita, ch' è si bella in vista,
Com' perde agevolmente in un mattino
Quel che'n molt 'anni a gran pena s'acquista !**
(Petrarch)

GRATITUDE

REGRET

RESIGNATION

Paris, Sunday, 4 October, 1846

NOBLE, TENDER-HEARTED VICTIM

The untainted purity of our love leaves me free now to offer this funeral homage, without any concealment of the solemn union in which our last weeks were spent together. Our sad lot has at least allowed us to feel that loyal examination of our conduct would increase the claim of either to the cordial respect of all honourable minds. When Humanity shall institute that rigorous enquiry into my private life for the guarantees of morality that should always be demanded from true philosophers, our correspondence would suffice, if needed, to prove the unbroken sacredness of a bond not common in its nature, and honourable to both our hearts alike. And I find an adequate recompense for this blameless conduct in being able now to utter my deepest feelings with that complete frankness by which the expression of my thoughts on every subject has been ever guided.

* O human life, in prospect bright,
How mayst thou easily, in half a day,
Lose all so hardly gained in many years.

With beautiful modesty, yielding at last to my affectionate entreaty, you had accepted the dedication of my second philosophical work, begun last year under the growing influence of the ennobling affection, which, in spite of death, will shed its glow over the rest of my sad life. Be it then to your sacred memory that this solemn testimony of gratitude is given, now that no tender scruples any longer restrain its utterance.

I.—Unwonted circumstances, not of my choosing, and but too easily explained, had checked the free flow of a deeply affectionate nature implanted in me by a most loving mother, so fit, alas, to have become your own. Fatally hampered thus, my heart seemed condemned for ever to privation of all fit sustenance, except in the insufficient though cherished exercise of universal love called out by my philosophic career. But for my contact, late in life, with you, I should never have known the full strength and clearness given to our highest affections by concentration on a worthy object.

This close intercourse of two hearts, both ripe for the purest harmony, had been preceded in either case by the spontaneous accomplishment of the conditions necessary to its full efficiency. Some years before our first interview, I had regained, morally, entire freedom of action, in a crisis the more decisive that it had not been sought by me; and I had already begun to feel the deep inadequacy of the isolation which at first had seemed so precious. The awakening of esthetic sensibilities, especially for the most sympathetic of the arts, could only indicate, it could not satisfy, the strong cravings of my heart. Yet all this in me would not have been enough had I not found in you the same freedom and the same tendencies. Long before our intercourse, the incomplete protection of the law had itself freed you from the unworthy bond to which you had yielded dutiful submission. Your position had again become one of painful dependence, unalleviated by fitting recognition of your noble nature, or even by the respect due to exceptional calamity.

Urged thus, and authorised, both of us, to seek at last for completeness of affection, our natural sympathies were strengthened beforehand by the sad resemblance of our personal history, though my calamity indeed was far the less. Friendship thus prepared, though recent, soon grew to the strength of an old and familiar tie, from the time when you knew me well enough to

write the words, *I trust you with the rest of my life*. Little did we then foresee how soon this precious mission would be ended !

To you alone, Clotilde, I owe it that for one incomparable year I shared, though late yet fully, the sweetest human feelings. The sacred intimacy at once of a father and a brother, such as our position made possible, revealed to me in you, amidst all other personal graces, that marvellous combination of lofty and of tender aspirations that perhaps was never before so perfectly realised. And this moral excellence, set off by the finest attributes of a woman's mind, was so happily combined with simplicity and strength of character ! Familiar contemplation of so perfect a type could not but increase, even when I knew it not, my systematic ardour for the universal progress towards perfection, to both of us the one great aim of public or of private life.

Those who know that in the constant exercise of generous instincts lies the principal source of true happiness, personal or social, will appreciate this solemn thanksgiving for the unutterable bliss thus revealed to me, and destined to effect such permanent results upon my moral growth. As will ever be the case where affection has been well bestowed, your strengthening influence has spontaneously made me more affectionate to my friends, more indulgent to my enemies, more gentle to my inferiors, more submissive to those above me. Far from paralysing my former energy, it has greatly added to its efficiency ; the strenuous perseverance that I had shown previously is now combined with patient moderation, to which till then I had been little inclined. To you, in great measure, I owe it that I endured without useless murmuring a shameful persecution, which, at other times, would have goaded me to ardent expressions of feeling, unseasonable, however justified.

Fears were felt, founded on imperfect knowledge, that the unexpected revival of my inner life might be injurious to my public work. You especially, in your extreme delicacy, were harassed by constant thought of this antagonism, which, despite all my protests, shows itself so touchingly in the very last of your priceless letters. Yet it is here in reality that my debt to you is greatest ; for it is you who have enabled me in a time of moral anarchy to realise that perfect harmony between private and public life, so essential both to the happiness and the nobleness of higher minds. Until then, indeed, nothing but my social mission had enabled me to bear the bitterness of my private life. But under

the impulse which you unconsciously gave, I felt and enjoyed the long-delayed recoil of energy by which private life enlarges the scope and vigour of public action.

Towards this result my philosophic reflections had already inclined me. I recognised fully the preponderating importance of home affections in the moral development of man. No one had a keener sense of the dangerous fallacy of modern utopias in this respect. Reverting to antiquity in their blind fanaticism for progress, they one and all insist that the moral nature shall rise without any intermediate step from primitive self-love to universal benevolence ; degenerating speedily into vague and barren philanthropy, too frequently subversive. From these metaphysical errors the new philosophy is free. It holds the principal excellence of modern morality to be the value set upon private life as the essential means for training the sympathies. Had this aspect of Positivism been more familiar to you, it would have dissipated your tender and conscientious fears that my personal affections might interrupt my social work.

The spontaneous convergence of personal with social ardour had peculiar fitness in the second period of my philosophic career, where from the very nature of the final effort towards which my whole mission had been directed, it was the heart rather than the intellect that must be addressed. Therefore, I state confidently that, apart from all personal feeling, no dedication was ever more deserved than this, because it records a real fellowship in work between us, indirect and involuntary, but none the less effective.

In a time when the pride of understanding is in reality the principal obstacle to true regeneration, both of us were thus so fortunately organised as to place intellect in its proper place ; adjusting it in that wise subordination to the heart which forms the necessary condition of all harmonious growth, whether individual or collective. Personal unity implies the supremacy of that class of inclinations round which alone all the others can be rallied ; and social union demands the systematic precedence of the sole impulse through which individualities can become convergent. Nor has the supremacy of the heart any inherent tendency to hamper intellect ; it simply gives direction to its action. On the other hand the exceptional authority of intellect since the close of the Middle Ages has been too frequently injurious to moral progress, stimulating anti-social vanity in the gratification

of barren curiosity. Therefore it is that the first of these two supremacies is the only one which is normal, whether for individuals or for societies ; the other is required only in revolutionary crises, of which it forms the characteristic feature. Such is the conclusion of sound philosophy when raised in its natural course to the true social point of view, which for all my predecessors had been unattainable.

The establishment of this great principle was the main purpose of my primary work, and thus the way was prepared for keeping it constantly applied by maintaining the invariable preponderance, logical and scientific, of social conceptions over all other branches of Positive speculation. On this basis the present work stands ; its object being, in accordance with the essential purpose of true philosophy, to systematise human life as a whole on the principle of the subordination of the intellect to the heart. The chief difficulty of my task is doubtless to induce the intellect to accept this position voluntarily, since no permanent result can be attained otherwise. But could I hope to effect this profound renovation in others, had it not become thoroughly familiar to myself ? Here, dearest one, it was that the reaction of pure personal love upon philosophic thought was so specially valuable to me.

By a happy coincidence these strong emotions arose at the very moment when my new work urgently demanded personal experience of tender feelings. In their first utterance, I told you openly of the harmony which I already felt growing between my highest thoughts and my dearest affections. After frankly devoting the first half of my life to the development of the heart by the intellect, I saw its second half consecrated to the illumination of the intellect by the heart, so necessary to give the true character to great social truths. But how could I hope for these new inspirations unless I had myself experienced the full strength of that feeling which is most powerful to raise man from his primal self-absorption, by deriving his highest happiness from another ? How thankfully I accepted then the unwonted and involuntary lot which had delayed my solitary experience of this highest feeling till riper age ; for the moral power of it is increased by the delay, when disciplined reason has given systematic sanction to the choice. If at first I lamented the inequality of our ages, your high qualities soon reconciled me to a fact which rendered our affection still more fitted for its lofty purpose.

Through you alone it is that I have been able to stir that reaction of the heart upon the intellect, without which my mission would have failed. But for your gentle influence, my long philosophic training, even though seconded by esthetic pursuits, could not have enabled me to realise the true systematic preponderance of universal love, the principal and final characteristic of Positivism, which more than any other will ensure its general acceptance. At each stage of my new work, till interrupted by the fatal illness, I delighted to testify my gratitude for the involuntary aid which kindled my highest inspirations. Never had I felt so clearly the intense reality of the fundamental truth proclaimed by the noble Vauvenargues,* the one thinker of the eighteenth century who spoke worthily of the heart, and whose intellectual and moral value offered so striking a parallel to yours ; a parallel completed, alas, by the same untimeliness of death !

II.—Our pure friendship then was, in every sense, as precious to my public as to my private life. Yet deep and just though my gratitude for our short past may be, it must ever fail to equal the eternal regret for the incomparable future that was opening before us at the time of our separation. The personal independence that you were on the point of reaching, and the perfect mutual confidence resulting from our recent experience, had opened a free course thenceforth for our rare occasions of union. Besides that we were happily united in opinion and even in tastes, what specially drew us together was, what is less common now, the tendency in both to make the heart supreme in human life. We had so often said to one another, *We weary of thought, and even of action. we never weary of love !* And each of us saw that the perfection of friendship implies difference of sex, saving it from the possibility of disturbance by rivalry.

Although this perfect harmony was taken from me so soon, it is enough that I have felt it once, never to be satisfied again with feebler sympathy. Thus I shall go down to the grave without having known, except for one short moment, that full identification for which my heart longed ! Not for me those chaste caresses, those loving looks, which dissipate in an instant the weariness of prolonged meditation, and only leave the charm of the elevation and the wide scope which it has brought ! At the beginning of the slow and painful struggle, which never clouded the reason,

* Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur—Tr.

though in an illness almost always accompanied by violent delirium, you pictured my inner life, in touching words, coming from a heart always absorbed in unselfish feeling : '*You will not have had your companion long !*'

But the hope of gaining some public sympathy with my personal sorrow must be vain until I show the inestimable loss that Humanity has sustained. Alas ! it is but a year ago, when I was asking you to promise that my own heart one day should be justly judged. The stern philosopher, thought to be accessible only to intellectual interests, had been at once recognised by you as the most loving of all men that you had known. Your uncontested decision, on a point essentially reserved for women, would perhaps have protected my memory against the angry sophisms and shallow prejudices by which intellectual reformers are usually harassed. Why, in defiance of the natural order of age, should it be to me that it falls now to reveal to the world its ignorance of you ?

My warrant for claiming public sympathy in the performance of this sacred duty, is that I saw in you not merely a noble friend and precious counsellor, but also a powerful fellow-worker in the immense work of regeneration called for in our time. The new philosophy, as this second treatise will show, has now reached the point where it calls upon your sex, not merely for earnest sympathy, but for active and potent aid ; and of this your heart and your mind were equally conscious. No intellectual reform can truly regenerate society until the transformation of ideas has been followed by that of feelings ; this last alone is decisive of its social power, and without it Philosophy could never be a substitute for Religion. The first part of the work, in which intellectual questions predominate, might naturally be reserved to my own sex ; but the second, where the heart predominates, should be the domain of yours. You alone, amidst the gifted women of our time, had clearly understood this succession and this union of efforts ; your conception of them, in your own way, being hardly less profound than my own.

The common prejudices as to the so-called hardness of Positivism ceased to have weight with you, when you saw the distinction between Positive Philosophy and the various special researches which prepared the way for it. All the conceptions that I had ever formed, or was yet to form, with the view of enlarging the scope of human power in every direction, I felt

sure of being able to submit with profit to your friendly judgment ; you alone I knew would never suspect me of affected feeling, so foreign to my whole intellectual and moral temper. The deep impression that Catholicism could not fail to make on such a nature had happily preserved your progress to intellectual freedom from being seriously hampered by the shallow deism of the last century ; besides, your mind, with all its gentle gaiety, could never be satisfied with the attitude of mere criticism, fit only for writers of the second rank. All that was noble or tender in the admirable system of mediæval life, can and should, you saw, be appropriated by the modern time ; with the superiority inherent in a system of which every principle can bear discussion, and in which the noblest aspirations are no longer tainted by inordinate self-love.

You saw already the noble career opened for women by participation in this mighty work ; the natural earnest of the wider field of legitimate influence reserved for them in the future. Your mind, familiar as it was with the principal productions of your sex, would soon have completed the necessary training. I had succeeded at last, notwithstanding your singular modesty, in showing you that exceptional purity made in your case the natural reaction of feeling upon thought one of peculiar power. You had already marked out for yourself as a contribution in aid of the regenerating movement a literary work, which at the same time was to forward your most legitimate desire for personal independence. I deeply regret not to be able to supply any fragment of your unfinished *Wilhelmine*, to which I had contributed friendly counsel, and even indirect participation, by the letter which at your request I wrote you, last January, on the true theory of marriage. But the secret oppression which weighed down your whole life was not arrested by your tomb ; the precious manuscript which you openly bequeathed me, was finally refused, in defiance of the most formal promises, and notwithstanding the explicit order of the head of your family, whose soldierly sense of honour was shocked at a violation of faith due perhaps to the painful motive of literary rivalry.

Yet the general purpose of this sketch should be indicated here, not so much in justice to you, as because it is so striking an example of a wise practical use of feminine talent. In a time when so many minds of vigour and experience are occupied with revolutionary dreams affecting the elementary constitution

of the family, it is well to note the instance of a young and gifted woman, ripened by sorrow, devoting a career of rich literary promise to the earnest defence of the inviolable laws that lie at the root of social union. If your sad history ever becomes known, it will be acknowledged that no one had greater cause for regarding the institution of marriage with unrelenting bitterness. But as you said so well in your touching story of *Lucie*: '*It is unworthy of a noble nature to diffuse its pain.*' This beautiful saying was unconsciously the motto for your life.

Guiltless victim of a strange fatality, you fully acknowledged that the generality indispensable to social rules must not be judged by the light of painful anomalies. Through all the injustice of your suffering, your calm reason saw clearly through the frivolous or sophistic declamation that concentrates itself on evils undoubtedly real, yet minor or accidental, and hurries forward to radical changes which would undermine the purity and permanence of the highest human feelings. Inspired by your own beautiful nature, your *Wilhelmine* was intended to refute, indirectly but decisively, the dangerous paradoxes of an eloquent contemporary authoress, with whom, if fairly judged, you had no reason to fear comparison.

Your singular heroine would have passed through the principal aberrations of the present time; but, preserved by innate purity and elevation of character, was at last to reach true domestic happiness without having ever succumbed throughout her various trials. The series of pictures of a woman's heart under varying influences, skilfully analysed by a mind of spotless purity, would have been keenly interesting and in the highest sense useful. To the honour of your sex I have observed that these sophistic attacks upon the family, though nominally intended for their profit, have found little acceptance among good women. Women, judging mainly from the heart, are soon revolted by the moral anarchy involved in them; while the more ambitious reason of men, plunging into these difficult speculations unguided by principle, fastens often upon pernicious extravagances, all the more dangerous and permanent because less checked by delicacy of feeling. Bearing out this contrast, the tendency of your own noble attempt was to close this mischievous controversy by the supreme intervention of true feeling, the natural field for womanly talent.

Although death stopped this sacred work, perseveringly pursued through much physical suffering, I hope this imperfect and inadequate account may be sufficient to inspire sincere regret, perhaps to stimulate similar effort. The oppressive sorrow of your life should at least predispose others to venerate principles capable of producing such convictions in those who were the heaviest sufferers from their rigorous application. Were it right to compare my case with yours, though your sorrows were so far the greater, I might remark that we alone in the party of progress have stood out in energetic defence of marriage, in spite of unmerited personal suffering. Besides the new argument thus furnished in behalf of this basis of social union, we have here a refutation of the commonplace prejudices against the moral side of the only philosophy now capable of systematically defending the principles of order, which are becoming more and more compromised by theological paralysis and metaphysical anarchy.

Our spontaneous convergence on these subjects is enough to convince competent judges of the philosophical value attaching to our union, quite independently of any mere dogmatic assent. Therefore all who seriously interest themselves in the new philosophy cannot but mourn the loss of precious aid from one who, while never failing in the finest delicacy of her sex, had thus in her own way made the highest conceptions of social truth so entirely her own. The Positivist principle of the fundamental harmony between the two sexes had been eagerly accepted by a nature so capable of applying it wisely. The dominant qualities of either sex being usually too feeble in the other, it is in other than merely material aspects that their union is indispensable to form the true elemental unit of human society.

If nothing great can come from individuals without perfect harmony between the mind and heart, so, too, all social renovation needs active co-operation of the two sexes. So long as women silently regret the extinction of Catholic Feudalism, dwelling, as they well may, on the beautiful and undying memories of chivalry, the modern revolution will have failed yet to assume its permanent character, and political reaction will continue to seem possible. The only way to make them cordial fellow-workers in the movement is to offer them a philosophy as satisfying to the needs of the heart as to those of the mind. This condition Positivism undoubtedly fulfils, but women can only be convinced of it by a woman.

With myself, too, doubtless, the heart must be the final aim ; but I have to reach it indirectly, through the mind, by securing the triumph of ideas corresponding to the highest sympathies. For you I had reserved the converse task, easier and equally effectual, of appealing directly to generous emotions, and of leading thought thus to almost resistless acceptance of the widest truths. Each of these two great tasks is socially inadequate without the other ; the first alone, leaving the feelings passive, is incompatible with practical application of the principles, even in isolated cases ; and the second, without the first, giving no coherent basis for the feelings, would stir up mystic agitations, in which man and Humanity would oscillate and wander endlessly without issue.

Both of us clearly understood this beautiful adjustment of functions, so correlated, yet so independent ; as distinct in procedure as in principle and in purpose ; the one striving to establish by scientific research solid masculine conviction ; the other by the agencies of art stirring the deepest feminine feeling. Between two services equally indispensable there could be no question of preference ; nor could their order of succession be a matter for debate, since each can and must strengthen the other. Our pure friendship could only have adorned and hastened on this unexampled union of efforts, giving thus a spontaneous example of the way in which true philosophy reconciles the hitherto opposed claims of the intellect and the heart.

III.—Such was the sacred union which entitles me now to call on higher natures for sympathy with my own private and unending sorrow ; for death alone destroyed this noble plan, the principle conditions of which had been already fulfilled, and which the life before us seemed sufficient to realise. Ah ! could my reason ever sink back to theologic creeds adapted only to the childhood of our race, this calamity would suffice for indignant rejection of the providential optimism which claims to console our sorrow by inculcating blind admiration of the most appalling disorder. Ever spotless victim, thou who knewest of life little but its deepest sorrows, thou wast stricken at the moment when thy just meed of personal happiness began, bound up with the loftiest of social missions ! And I too, though less pure, did I deserve, after such unjust suffering, to be thus cut off from bliss that came so late to a lonely life, consecrated from earliest years to the

highest service of Humanity? And is not this two-fold private sorrow a public loss, for which it is impossible to imagine compensation?

But sound philosophy, while setting aside for ever chimerical and idle beliefs, henceforth as noxious as formerly they were useful, rejects also the complaints that follow them. It does not require us to accept the dangerous sophisms which would veil the exceeding imperfection of the universal order. Yet it is the only source of that true Resignation which submits courageously to evils which human intervention cannot reach, while striving to react on outward fatalities by strengthening the inner life. My sorrow admits neither consolation or distraction; and I seek none. As Vauvenargues said when he too was lamenting an untimely loss: '*To be consoled is to love no longer, and that is shallow-hearted and ungrateful.*' Far from forgetting you, I should strive to suppose you living, that our union may become ever more complete. Our one incomparable year of mutual and virtuous love has left me many pure and noble memories, strengthened by characteristic correspondence. These I shall call to life, as I have done for six months, by daily, weekly, and ultimately by annual acts of devotion. This treasure of affections is the chief sustenance of my inner life.

And if, despite all efforts, the sad closing picture will still force its way before the rest, yet with it comes back the latest testimony of your sacred love. To me alone were those last words spoken; none else was present except Sophie, the noble-hearted servant whom your generous spirit loved to look on as a sister, and whose unflagging devotion to your long sufferings will ever claim our deepest gratitude. Can I ever forget the last command, solemnly repeated five times, when you could see and hear no longer, but could still love and think, a few minutes before the final breath: '*Comte, remember that I have done nothing to deserve my suffering!*'

These venerated words, too faithful portraiture of your whole life, will command my inmost soul's obedience. They are the irrevocable seal of a union which for both alike was almost equally exclusive; for in the sphere of personal feeling each was all to the other. Death cannot bring back my former isolation, for nothing now can shatter or unloose the only tie which binds me. The culture of all memories, personal or public, is upheld by Positivism more systematically and with greater effect than by

any other system, and by this precious attribute of the new Philosophy we are the first to profit. How many loving hearts have fed through long years upon this sad sustenance, without the same resources for procuring it !

The highest purpose of our union was to make our hearts more perfect ; and that purpose can still be pursued with delight, even though the intercourse of feeling is active on one side only. True insight into human nature, individual or collective, prescribes the general rule of indissolubility for all close ties. A finer extension of the same principle leads on similar grounds to the universal rule of widowhood. This moral duty, honoured and approved by all, becomes for either sex a fruitful source of moral progress and of noble joy. If a whole life hardly suffices for two beings to know and love each other perfectly, if therefore, through perfect constancy alone can the deepest human feelings ripen, why should death break off the continuity of sympathy ? When the fatal separation comes, is not the obligation equally undoubted whether the union has been of months or of years ? Or rather, should not that be more strenuously prolonged of which the duration has been briefest ? Forgetfulness can only come from shallowness of heart, which for want of persevering tenderness loses at once the best fruit sown in past years. Still more certain is the degradation of inconstancy in him who, deprived of the higher love, is satisfied with some coarser affection, as in the case so energetically stigmatised by Calderon.*

Six months of deep meditation on this bitter crisis of my life have thus added strength to the solemn promises which comforted your last hours. And anxiety for my own highest welfare will keep the sense of this duty ever present with me. Therefore it is that every day before the shrine consecrated to you, I repeat with growing assurance, that death for ever seals the bond of affection, esteem, and reverence.

Here then, for me, in this irrevocable communion of our lives, the age of personal passion finds its fitting close. Henceforth I give myself exclusively to the noble civic passion which from earliest youth devoted every energy of my being to the great work of regeneration. Thus it is that the seeds sown by

* Es hombre vil, es infame,
El que, solamente atento
A lo bruto del deseo,
Viendo perdido lo mas,
Se contenta con lo ménos.

your influence shall, in spite of death, grow to full maturity. Though an active fellow worker no longer, yet your silent aid cannot be taken from me. During our sacred year of happiness, your sweet impulses mingled far more than you could ever believe with my highest philosophic inspirations. The same blest influence has been with me during the last six months, aiding my thoughts as they moved onwards in the midst of tears. Wisely cherished, it will continue, I feel, to purify and kindle my highest thoughts. It strengthens and ennobles too all that sense of beauty which we shared in common, and which, besides its intrinsic worth, is now the sole antidote for the oppressive barrenness of scientific study.

Consecrated henceforth to the work of social reconstruction built up on the basis of philosophic reform, I shall feel the full and immediate value of that long-delayed completion of my moral training which I owe to you. In all that relates to the true position of women, and to their increasing share in the general movement of mankind, it will be my delight to strengthen and develop my philosophic conclusions by the vivid remembrance of our complete agreement on a subject in which it is peculiarly important for the thoughts of one to receive full sanction from the other. With singular clearness you had seen the natural tendency of Positivism to bring forward into systematic prominence, both in private and in public life, the worship of woman, which in the Middle Ages had been faintly foreshadowed. In the varied developments of this fertile range of thoughts and feelings, I shall henceforth feel the inspiring charm of personal experience, the sincerity and fulness of which can be contested by none.

In bringing these words of well-merited Dedication to a close, I feel already the large results flowing from our eternal union. By the fulfilment of a loving duty I am brought back to the great work which had been suspended by our calamity. Meanwhile the moral reaction thus obtained will restore, I trust, all my former powers. By distinct and regular utterance, feelings no less than thoughts gain increased precision and coherence. This perhaps, with competent judges, may be an excuse for the unusual character and length of this testimony of respect. Those thinkers who know the influence of generous sympathies upon the mind will not think that time spent in retracing and rekindling pure emotions has been spent in vain. But I appeal more especially to those in whom the impulses of the heart are paramount ;

whether amongst women, amongst the people, or amongst the young.

Farewell, changeless friend ! Farewell, my Saint Clotilde, thou who wert to me in the stead of wife, of sister, and of child ! Farewell, loved pupil, true fellow-worker ! Thy angel influence will govern what remains to me of life, whether public or private, ever urging me onwards towards perfection ; purifying feeling, enlarging thought, ennobling conduct. May this solemn incorporation into my whole life reveal at last to the world thy hidden worth ! Thus only can thy benefits now be recognised by rendering my own performance of the mighty task before me more complete. As the highest personal reward for the noble work that yet remains to be done under thy lofty inspiration, it will be granted perhaps, that thy name shall remain ever joined with mine in the most distant memories of grateful Humanity.

La pierre du cercueil est ton premier autel ! *

(*Elisa Mercœur*).

Donna, se'tanto grande e tanto vali,
 Che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre,
 Sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali.
 La tua benignità non pur soccorre
 A chi dimanda, ma molte fiate
 Liberamente al dimandar precorre.
 In te misericordia, in te pietade,
 In te magnificenza, in te s' aduna,
 Quantunque in creatura è di bontade ! †

(*Dante*).

AUGUSTE COMTE

* Thy tombstone is thy first altar !

† So mighty art thou lady, and so great,
 That he who grace desireth, and comes not
 To thee for aidance, fain would have desire
 Fly without wings. Not only him who asks
 Thy bounty succours, but doth freely oft
 Forerun the asking. Whatso'er may be
 Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
 Relenting mercy, large munificence
 Are all combined in thee.

(*Paradiso, Canto XXXIII*).

FINAL INVOCATION TO
THE POSITIVE POLITY
(WRITTEN IN 1854)

Final Invocation

Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda
Che basti a render voi grazia per grazia.*
(Dante).

LIVE FOR OTHERS.

LIVE OPENLY

Paris, Monday, 9 Dante, 66
(24 July, 1854)

NOBLE AND TENDER-HEARTED LADY, MY PATRONESS AND
EXEMPLAR

Eight years have passed since, in gratitude, in regret, and in resignation, I offered to thy sacred memory an exceptional dedication, in the middle of the year of mourning, though it could not be published till five years later. What I now write is still more alien to general custom, but it will excite less surprise, for it is the termination of a construction, the chief phases of which justify, and with increasing force, such an act of homage. Perhaps thereby I may originate a new practice, a complementary institution, which will, with the public sanction, henceforth enhance the effect of the dedication proper, when worthy of any elaboration involving a succession of efforts.

The involuntary delay in the publication of my original tribute was fortunately not without a compensation, in that it at once drew the sympathy of the nobler minds, as during the preceding three years the *General View* had been preparing them to ratify the consecration therein announced. An analogous result is more certain now, when I here complete the holy dedication, the justice of which all competent readers have fully accepted. In the present state of mental indiscipline

* *Affection fails me to requite thy grace
With equal sum of gratitude.*
Paradiso, Canto IV., Cary's Translation.

this fourth volume will frequently be read, at first at any rate, when there is no acquaintance with the three others. But it suffices to justify this final homage, which will soon recall attention to the dedication of the first volume. As more systematic than either of the others, it brings into stronger relief the correlation between synthesis and sympathy, and it is to thee I owe its acceptance as a paramount influence.

Each of the seven essential steps in my construction of a religion has its own distinct trace of the angelic influence acknowledged at its opening. Thy aid is undeniable in regard to the three which are distinctive of the first volume, though it be adequately recognised only for the first of the three.* My fundamental work, the *Philosophy*, revealed beyond dispute the composite and continuous existence which sways with increasing power the course of the world. It had even gradually reached the point of proclaiming the supremacy of the heart over the intellect, as the only source, spontaneous or systematic, of human unity. The Great Being, thus revealed in her nature and destination, it was enough, to render it possible to create the universal religion, that a holy love should adequately familiarise me with the basic principle in which my first life was seen to issue. So it was that the dogma of Humanity arose, on the first anniversary (1847) of the fatal event which separated us, in the decisive course of lectures from which this whole treatise springs. All who justly appreciate the filiation here traced must now acknowledge that it should be carried further back, so as to extend to the dedication, which a few months before (October 4, 1846), gave their first formal expression to all the germs of the subsequent progress.

That thy participation in the two steps which mark the second half of the first volume is less felt, is only because they have not yet become as familiar to most of my disciples. When I introduced the name Positivist, the public, in its empiricism and scepticism, judged it to be as contradictory as it was strange. In thirty years I have so raised it, that it is now sought, as a pledge of order no less than of progress, by many who do not satisfy its main conditions. Of the seven meanings which it combines, the last—and fully to feel this last I was incapable without thee—is the least appreciated, though it be the most decisive, as bearing directly on the sole source of true unity. Those who most fully recognise the necessary interdependence of six of the characteristics of the

* The dogma of Humanity.—*Ed.*

Positive spirit, at once real, useful, certain, exact, organic, and even relative, have not gone so far in their regeneration as to link its intellectual claims to the moral signification of the term. But, though I still am the only one in whom *Positive*, thanks to thee, has become equivalent to *sympathetic*, I doubt not but that all my true disciples will soon follow me so far under the irresistible impulse of the synthesis but now ended. Then the Western revolution, as a whole, will find, in familiar use, its condensed expression in the complete regeneration of a fundamental term, henceforth destined to connote the highest morality, whilst retaining the advantages attaching to its originally material connotation.

As foreshadowing this result, I may appeal to the growing appreciation of the two complementary steps of the first volume, intellectual steps it is true, but yet evidencing directly the emotional source of the true synthesis. The systematisation of the Positive logic, by virtue of the definitive adoption of the subjective method, gives form and expression to the whole of the influence on my intellect of thy holy ascendancy. How without thee should I have duly felt that feeling alone can combine images with signs to elaborate thought, in such a way as to bring into direct connection the instinct of Fetichism and the reason of Positivism? When once it is rightly understood that thou hadst as large a share in the second step of religious Positivism* as in the first, there will be little delay in tracing thy influence on the third.† My construction of the cerebral theory is so intimately bound up with the institution of the subjective method, that all who by sympathy are qualified for true synthesis will feel that thy aid was indispensable in a creation which has in it more of the feminine than the masculine element.

It is at this point that begins the increasing divergence between the Positivists, who style themselves intellectual, without being more intelligent, and the complete, that is to say, the religious Positivists. Although the majority of the former limit their adhesion to my philosophy, some have already advanced so far as to accept the dogma of Humanity, the connection of which, with the whole of Sociology, is hidden only to the sophist. Their acceptance, however, as purely intellectual, bears no fruit for them; it is not able to form the starting point for further advance, in default of a moral impulse. Hence it is that these abortive Positivists have found fault with my dedication, taxing it with sentimental

* Positive Logic.—Ed.

† The Cerebral Theory.—Ed.

exaggeration, and I doubt not that the present invocation will clash still more with their feelings, on the same ground. In their estimate of the subjective method and of the cerebral theory they differ but little from the thinkers who are so belated as to reject as ontological or mystical the dogma of Humanity, whilst admitting Sociology.

Wherever there has been a just sense of the rational inter-connection of the three steps which form the progression proper to my first volume, there will be no difficulty in appreciating the four other stages of religious Positivism. More particularly is the process easy in the case of the two gone through in the second volume, and principally of that one which, as occupying the centre of the regeneration by sympathy, will early be regarded as the most decisive of all.* In assigning, at the opening of my social statics, the highest place in the encyclopædia to Morals, even as compared with Sociology, I systematically placed my religious construction higher than my philosophical creation, which is its groundwork, in obedience to the true theory of unity. The influence of woman, and of such influence it was for thee to offer me the highest type, appears unmistakably in this advance, the best distinction between social and intellectual Positivism. Nor is it more possible to contest thy co-operation in the next step† in close connection with the last which completes my second volume, by basing the Socioeracy on the normal division on the two powers, a division which was familiar to thee, owing to thy Catholic instincts, in spite of the disturbing influences of scepticism.

With difficulty should I have brought thee, with thy extreme modesty, to acknowledge the large share thou hadst in the whole of the third volume, for its province is the most remote from thy own special education. But had we been able to accomplish the noble wish thou spontaneously didst express to me, to study history synthetically, thou wouldst now feel how greatly thou didst aid me in the systematisation of my dynamical conceptions. It would be enough for thee to understand that the historical synthesis necessarily finds its condensed expression in the establishment of a direct connection between the two extreme terms of man's initiation, Feticchism and Positivism.‡ The admirable *Canzone*§ which I have repeated every morning these last nine years,

* The supremacy of Morals.— *Ed.*

‡ The incorporation of Feticchism.— *Ed.*

† The separation of the two Powers.— *Ed.*

§ *Les Pensées d'une Fleur.*

is as characteristic an utterance of Fetichist poetry as thy sacred novel prefigures Positive idealisation. Under so spontaneous a form of co-operation, thou couldst not have refused to accept thy involuntary share in my construction of the philosophy of history, though it is an influence not as yet recognised even by the best of my disciples.

None will question thy influence in regard to the seventh step,* which in this volume closes the regular upward ascent of religious Positivism, by its removal of the serious discrepancies I left in it last year. Had it been permitted thee to contemplate the best fruits of thy eternal ascendancy, thou wouldst on thy own promptings have pointed out to me the threefold dissonance which, perceived but late, was yet recognised in time to preserve this last volume from the peculiar defect of the Catechism.† Though all my true disciples at once accepted the systematic determination which led me to place definitively the worship before the doctrine, no one of them could so completely rise above the empiricism of theology and scepticism as to suggest the change. But with thee, sympathy would have so aided synthesis that the improvement would have been realised even in the Catechism, the holy work in which thy co-operation was purely subjective. Not having thy help, I was near missing this final step, which, as condensing my whole religious development, will be naturally a greater shock to incomplete Positivists than were its six predecessors.

Thus, we see how the examination in detail of thy intimate co-operation in each phase of my religious construction issues in establishing more conclusively the fatal difference there is between subjective participation and objective assistance. Several years must elapse before Positivism, at length complete by virtue of the present work, pass from the most philosophical to the most poetical nation, there to receive its ideal expression, the decisive step in the progress and the only one beyond my power to take. The interval was to have been thine, that in it thou mightest prepare the way for the final acceptance of a religion, which is esthetic rather than scientific, by the formal sanction and intervention of the sex best qualified by sympathy for the state of synthesis.

The moral superiority of woman, with its legitimate complement derived from her social existence, enables her to move directly towards the unity which results from a gradual incorpora-

* The precedence of the Worship.—*Ed.*

† Published 1852.

tion with Humanity. With women synthesis may remain unsystematic without detriment to their proper mission, a mission which, as never ambiguous and always with an immediate aim, transforms each act and each thought into a special development of the true worship, under the persistent stimulation of affection ; whereas the practical and intellectual duties of man prevent him from condensing the positive religion in its fundamental constituents. Compelled to construct a systematic synthesis that he may submit himself to the universal order, submit better and modify it more largely, he is diverted from the cultivation of the within by the effort he makes to connect it with the without. He neglects the end in the too constant consideration of the means, and so exhausts his intellect, and even his activity on fruitless or disturbing efforts, whilst love, ever tending to the good, chooses, amidst the number of appreciable relations, those only which can ameliorate us. When a sound estimate of human knowledge prevents the philosopher from being puffed up, nothing keeps him from drying up, owing to the fatal isolation without which the weakness of our understanding would defeat his philosophic meditations. Ever imminent, this deterioration cannot be overcome but by the due intervention, objective or subjective, of woman, aided by the esthetic culture which is naturally connected with such intervention.

He who was commissioned by the Great Being to institute the true religion by systematising Positive morality, even he could not but verify the law in his own person ; for the mental contention involved in his labours counteracted the sympathetic influence which was the natural result of their synthetic character. Here, when completing the constitution of the true unity, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction at being able to contemplate directly its affective source without detriment to a construction which must benefit others more than myself. But this reward would have been more efficacious had it been given me to make thee whilst yet living a sharer in it, however highly I may estimate the nascent appreciation of ' the noble lady whose memory is cherished and venerated by all my true disciples.' This harmony of mind and heart becomes the best condensation of a construction, the most characteristic feature of which is the elaboration of the true theory of the affective sex. As representative of this bond, it were enough to bring together thy most remarkable sayings, adding to them the only one I have not quoted, which will be considered

the most touching when the occasion of it is known : ' The bad are often more in need of pity than the good.'

Reduced to a subjective identification with thee, as the result of one incomparable year of objective union, I have at any rate turned it to the best account, by availing myself to the full of the advantages attaching to its immutability. To my public life not less than to my private life, may I apply the language which, for several years, has been a part of my daily prayers. ' Notwithstanding our separation my last state surpasses all that I could hope, or even dream, before I knew thee.' Our love, which was always holy, made me first chaste, then sober ; and the purification of these two instincts, fostered by thy subjective influence, enabled me the better to overcome the other self-regarding instincts by the constant encouragement of the three instincts of sympathy. Thou wouldst, perhaps, still persist in reproaching me for endangering, by too great kindness and self-abandonment, a personal ascendancy so many have easily acquired by an artful reserve. And yet I cannot regret this disposition of mind, calculated as it is to promote my main usefulness, in accordance with the aptness thou didst attribute to me of becoming all things to all men, an aptness more appropriate in the founder of Relativism than in the founder of Catholicism. To thee I owe it that I have returned to the holy regime of the Middle Ages, that I have devoted, that is, for the last eight years, the first hour of each day to the direct culture of the better feelings of human nature. Evident as regards my morals, nay, even my intellectual growth, the renovation extends even to my physical condition, equally with the others exempt from the ordinary forewarnings of old age, notwithstanding the laboriousness of my career, the prolongation of which will be thy doing.

In this holy patronage, thou wilt be always assisted by the unrivalled help of her whom thy great soul recognised as its worthy sister, in her who, since thy death, has so fully deserved the happiness which thou didst dream of *for us three*. Over and above its practical services, the family which she guides offers me daily a salutary spectacle, proving to what an extent the least cultivated may enjoy, under all forms, what thou hast called the pleasures of devotion to others. I am thus led to feel more deeply how dignity, happiness, and even health reside in unity, as in the impairment of unity lie our chief diseases, moral, intellectual, or physical. Thy simple-hearted companion revives, unknown

to herself, my systematic tendency to judge acts and thoughts with special reference to their source in, or their influence upon, the affections, these naturally engaging her attention as a mother and a wife. Vowed equally with myself to moral cultivation, the frequent superiority of her empirical suggestions leads me to a sounder estimate of woman's nature, and is the objective complement of thy subjective action upon me for my personal improvement, as a man and as a citizen.

She, as thou, never was in personal contact with the venerable mother who failed, in spite of her zeal and her capacity, adequately to educate my heart ; but as my adopted daughter she daily joins with me and with thee in my just adoration of her holy and unhappy memory. Thus placed under the threefold patronage which I have shown to be normal for each true believer, I have now so far set forth its constant influence on my public life as to warrant me in here asking posterity to connect it directly with my own immortality. These five years I daily complete my morning prayers with this resolution : *'I will venture to end my religious construction by an open injunction to my disciples of both sexes to obtain for me one day, as the principal reward of my services, my solemn interment in the midst of you three, in the name of the Great Being, with whom we shall be for ever incorporated.'*

In this formal expression of my characteristic wish, I hope, in accordance with our faith, by a noble publicity to facilitate its attainment, for such publicity will allow not merely a truer sense of its reasonableness, but also an easier victory over any opposition. Supposing the venerable remains already dispersed, owing to Christian neglect, it will be enough that a noble cenotaph be attached to our tomb as in the case of my latest patroness.

The reward I here claim is one too well adapted to express the nature and manifest the ascendancy of the religion of Humanity to be denied me, even if it were to follow immediately upon the publication in its entirety of this holy treatise. Already thy angelic influence is appreciated so far that higher souls, even from across the seas, sympathise with my continuous adoration of thee. This just extension of my inadequate gratitude will shortly penetrate more deeply and spread more widely under the impulse of this last and most decisive volume. Thanks to the noble confidence of thy aged father, the painter's skill has been able to form a sweet image of thee after the sketch by thy mother. It is perhaps destined before long to be, to my disciples, the best

emblem of the great Being, the systematisation of whose worship was effected under thy holy influence.

The same pre-eminent patronage which directed the great work of my second life must preside over the three works which remain to complete it. I shall give a special appreciation of this its latest service, when I dedicate the most important of the three to her, who, in my earliest childhood, implanted in me an instinctive anticipation of true morality. This complementary labour ended, my last publication will be, in ten years, the discharge of my solemn promise as to our holy correspondence, to be preceded by thy life and even by my own. But feeling, which alone consecrates everything, will perhaps justify me in ending my second life in the body by venturing on a sketch of the third, the full development of which is denied me by the sum of the imperative conditions under which we live, though I feel its true character. After passing, by a normal course, from my philosophical foundation to my religious construction, it would be well, by an exceptional effort, to complete the latter by the poetical creation which alone will be able to procure for it universal ascendancy. Irreconcilable with the laws of bodily life, such completeness of accomplishment is sufficiently in unison with the laws of cerebral life for me to have been able to conceive and propose the eminent composition which I may not execute. Whilst renouncing any fruitless attempt, I yet hope to complete the volume which concerns us by an outline of a poem in thirteen cantos on the second life which that volume explains in me through thee.

I must end this final invocation by referring to its true source an utterance in which the founder of the Positive Religion completes the presentment of the normal manners, by throwing private acts open to the inspection and interference, under proper conditions, of the public. Over and above the general duty of proclaiming in time our last wishes, there is a special reason why at fifty-seven I here state three resolutions, which cannot be carried into effect without the voluntary aid of all Positivists—

1st.—The body of my adherents will continue the annuity of two thousand francs (£80) mentioned in my fourth circular in order that I may discharge, up to its natural termination, the obligation incurred in my youth by my only really grave fault

2nd.—An annuity of fifteen hundred francs (£60) shall be set apart, by the gratitude of the true believers, for the adopted daughter who, for the last thirteen years, has devoted to me her inestimable services.

3rd.—This eminent proletary will keep, for my successor, in its actual state and at the cost of the universal church, the sacred residence in which was conceived and worked out the creation of the Positivist religion, and in which the sacred rites of that religion will continue to be celebrated till the acquisition of a temple.

So soon as this volume is sufficiently known, I will communicate directly to each of my thirteen executors the minor arrangements necessary to ensure the execution of these three resolutions.

My actions, my thoughts, and my feelings, all equally centre around her who presides over my second life, that life in which, now for eight years, there has been growing an unexampled harmony between the conduct of private and that of public life. When my love was sufficiently purified, I saw thee nobly accept my plan of legal adoption, which only failed through the catastrophe which befell us. Since thy influence has become exclusively subjective, veneration has more and more prevailed over attachment, without diverting me from benevolence, the culture of which has been constant through my just efforts to spread a right estimate of an angel who passed unknown. If this fusion of all the feelings of man for woman appear to involve a contradiction, it is only because of the coarseness of man's impulses. Anticipated in poetry and in religion, it authorises me to conclude this final invocation by combining the address and the wish, so amply characteristic, which I repeat aloud every morning, borrowing from the two sublime interpreters of the Middle Ages :

*Vergine-Madre, figlia del tuo figlio,**
Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te ! †

* Virgin-Mother, daughter of thy son. (Dante *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII).

† May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee.

(Thomas à Kempis *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, Chapter 5).

My Third Saint Clotilde

HER ETERNAL NEW BIRTH

(THY TOMBSTONE IS THY FIRST ALTAR)*

Paris, Wednesday, 2 June, 1847

NOBLE AND TENDER WIFE†

At last has ended this painful year, during which sacred mourning made it impossible for my heart to feel all the charm and the force of thy eternal presence. Our union, thus tried and sanctified by thy death, has become unchangeable, and henceforward will freely exert its powerful influence, constantly ameliorating my life, both public and private.

Already I can take credit for having, in a dignified manner, submitted to our fatal catastrophe, pursuing, in new ways, under so great an affliction, the moral regeneration which I owe to thee. During this year, indispensable for initiating our definitive existence, I congratulate myself on having taken up my pen only for thy sake. Nevertheless, I have effected a decisive step for my noble social mission, even beyond my hope, by the great oral exposition,‡ just completed, and powerfully aided by my invocation of thee. When celebrating, notwithstanding thy death, the sweet anniversary§ which will ever recall to my memory the noble beginning of our intimacy, I naturally prepared the Dedication|| which, though a just tribute, thy touching modesty with difficulty accepted. When amid my grief I could accomplish this exceptional offering it nobly solaced and deeply stimulated me. This

* *La pierre du cercueil est ton premier autel !*

† Wife was changed by Auguste Comte into *Patroness* in the Seventh Saint-Clotilde, and the five succeeding.

‡ *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme* delivered as lectures, 1847. It was published in 1848, afterwards reprinted as the first part of the *Positive Polity*, 1851. It constitutes the General View, *Positive Polity*, Vol. 1, part 1. It was in these lectures that Auguste Comte first expounded Positivism as the universal and final religion—the Religion of Humanity.

§ 2nd June. ¶ June is the day of St. Clotilde in the Catholic calendar and therefore the *fête* of Clotilde de Vaux. For this occasion, in 1845, Auguste Comte composed the *Letter on Social Commemoration*, addressed to Clotilde de Vaux. It was written on 2 June. See p. 303.

|| The Dedication, dated 4th October, 1846, of the *Positive Polity* to Clotilde de Vaux. It was not published till 1851, with the first volume of that work. See p. 313.

unexampled preamble will afford me a two-fold satisfaction, proclaiming our complete and eternal union, while emphatically pointing out the true and final character of my philosophy. While awaiting an opportune publication of my Dedication, I already and habitually experience its beneficial effects under both aspects. Hardly was it finished when the noble visit of thy old father gave me an unforeseen opportunity of loyally announcing my Dedication to the only member of thy family who could appreciate its value. Three months later a most unjustifiable attempt* afforded me the opportunity of announcing it with dignity to the unhappy woman who so little appreciated the honourable name conferred on her by the fatal generosity of my youthful rashness. Her culpable conduct was thus justly punished by the bitter fate of receiving, without possible protest, my avowal, which announced to this proud, though callous soul her unavoidable condemnation by posterity. Lastly, I have, beyond my hope, been able to give my Dedication a solemn publicity, through my oral manifestation,† thus associating it with the honourable approval of a select audience. The date of my philosophical discourse on woman‡ coincided with the very day of our terrible anniversary. This coincidence severely tried my courage, but I shall always take credit for my noble endurance of this trial, finding a precious compensation, deeply felt, in the sympathy then manifestly shown.

Thus, even before Humanity can consecrate our eternal identification, I have, in various ways, decisively indicated the real nature of this exceptional Dedication, equally honourable to both of us. No longer for me alone are our names as inseparable as those which usually form the historic types of perfect union.§ A young friend,|| by whose affection and merit I may, at last, be compensated for so many abortive disciples, lately assured me that my final and noblest recompense would be the tomb, common to both, where we should be reunited for ever by a noble public intervention, overcoming all private opposition. This expectation, spontaneously expressed, confirms an incomparable hope, which I hardly venture to entertain. I accordingly,

* This refers to Madame Comte's letter (8th January, 1847, to Auguste Comte, and his reply 10th January, 1847). See the Appendix to his Testament, p. 503.

† See note on page 343.

‡ Sunday, 4 April, 1847. This coincides with Sunday, 5 April 1846, the day of Clotilde de Vaux's death. This discourse was published in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. II.

§ e.g. Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura.

|| M. Pierre Laffitte. See pp. 390, 478.

soon after felt it my duty to bring to thy tomb this valued confidant of my dear weekly visits in order that some day he may, aided by our excellent Sophie,* carry out his happy inspiration.

Notwithstanding the sorrows of this first year of trial, I feel that it has supplied the only possible results I could expect, by preparing, in every way, the final character of our unalterable union. Our principal memories could not be adequately felt by me while I was overpowered by the fatal impression of thy death. Nevertheless, the invaluable solace which they have already afforded shows what I may expect henceforward from these resources, by developing their inexhaustible charms. Since thy dead image began to be familiar to me, the religious exercises, daily and weekly, which I devote to thee, have become increasingly beneficial, and I feel insensibly impelled to prolong them. Henceforward, thou art so entirely bound up with every aspect of my life, even of my public life, that all deep impressions specially recall thee to me. The only being who constantly shares my retired life—the eminent domestic, so remarkable for her pure and judicious zeal—is still more endeared to me by the two-fold ties of affection and gratitude that for ever bind her to thee. Never will she abandon her true appreciation of the charming projects which thy noble soul confided to her for the joint happiness of *all three*. Moreover, this year of preparation has naturally pointed out the three special periods destined for my habitual commemoration. I shall celebrate, as to-day, the dear anniversary marking the commencement of our virtuous affection†; next the imperishable Catholic Saint's Day,‡ when I shall associate my personal sorrow with all those united by this touching community; lastly, the unexampled day§ that recalls to my memory both thy birth and thy death.

Thus, my dear Clotilde, I can always relish, in the melancholy fashion alone left to me, this habitual life of the heart, the beneficial evolution of which, though late, was due to thee. Henceforward, I shall freely gather the inestimable fruits of a deep tenderness, perfectly pure, and, when conscientiously examined, full of charm. At first, indeed, my heart secretly murmured against the restraints which thou didst rightly impose

* Madame Martin Thomas (*née* Sophie Bliaux), the servant of Auguste Comte since August, 1842, and subsequently his adopted daughter.

† June 2, 1845.

‡ 2 November, All Souls' Day.

§ 5 April; Clotilde was born on 3 April.

on my ardent nature. But now, how deeply do I congratulate myself that thy confession of tender affection* came so late as to ensure an unalterable chastity, notwithstanding the irreproachable liberty which each of us had exceptionally gained. Is it not sufficient for me that, in our last confidences, you unaffectedly regretted not having granted this ineffable pledge to my love? This regret, spontaneously expressed, will always be for me a recollection more precious than could have been the too transient remembrance of actual fulfilment, for this would not have allowed me to look back without uneasiness, or even remorse, on our dear past.

My assiduous worship of thee insures, as far as possible, the happiness and improvement of my private life, yet, far from injuring my public life it rather confirms the noble character which, thanks to thee, manifestly belongs to it. Religion† having for ever lost its original aptitude—real though inadequate—for systematically cultivating human sympathies, a false philosophy, as disastrous as it is chimerical, only consecrates a pretended intellectual superiority, while leaving the heart more and more devoid of regular culture. On the contrary, the chief office of Positivism consists in a complete systematisation, which, based on the preponderance of the heart, develops universal benevolence, far beyond what was practicable under the previous regimen, even in the best centuries of the Middle Ages. Henceforward, our principal aim will be the complete subordination of intelligence to sociability; the intellect being mainly employed in helping the growth and guiding the employment of our benevolent affections, which are the real source of true human happiness, both private and public. Had it not been for thy constant influence on my heart, possibly I might never have adequately felt that this holy discipline, far from hindering lofty theory, secures for it better nourishment than that which, now-a-days, springs from a blind tendency to the indefinite multiplication of speculations almost always useless, even when not chimerical.

Thus I owe it to thee, my Clotilde, that my personal life

* See p. 407. In her last illness.

† i.e. Theological Religion. Compare this passage, also Dedication (see p. 313) with the Fifth Confession (1849, see p. 359), when Auguste Comte expressly treated Positivism as being not merely Philosophy, but also the true and final Religion of Humanity. It is important for the right understanding of Auguste Comte's 'second life' to observe that its development was gradual, and was mainly due to the subjective influence of Clotilde de Vaux, through his worship, instituted after her death, of which she became the central figure.

becomes an application of the new philosophy.* In no other way could I so quickly and so clearly develop the true and final character, on which mainly depends its moral, and even its mental, ascendancy. This harmony, till now without example, between my personal life and my general life, is as important for my public function as for my own happiness, since it familiarises me with the domestic and social order, so new yet so natural, which I propose for Humanity. Private life being the best school for genuine public feeling, no other influence could strengthen and stimulate, as thine does, the moral and mental dispositions essential for my great mission which embraces benevolence and purity, nay more, courage and perseverance. On the other hand, the emotional superiority of my philosophy, though profoundly real, is still so little recognised that its systematic proof requires my personal example. The efficacy of our holy union in this respect is unquestionable, and is clearly proved by the remarkable advance which my doctrine has made during my year of mourning. My philosophical exposition, continued during three months, has specially confirmed this efficacy, by rendering the public aware, as I am, that an honourable private affection exerts a salutary influence in making sociability, rightly understood, more complete and more worthy of respect. Nothing could touch my heart and intellect more deeply than the unanimous and cordial reception which, at the concluding lecture, was so unmistakably accorded to my decisive declaration that Positivism in its entirety, intellectually and socially, is centred in the conception of Humanity, and that her familiar image is naturally Woman. *Humanity is the only true Great Being, whose members we necessarily are, to whom we must always refer our thoughts if we would know her, our sympathies if we would love her, and our actions if we would serve her.* Doubtless none of my auditors could ignore the great help which this valuable condensation of a vast system indirectly owed to the influence of the eminent woman whom I had already, with justice, recommended to the veneration and affection of the public.

After so many proofs that, notwithstanding painful obstacles, our virtuous tenderness possessed philosophic power, I feel good reason to treat it as a perpetual source of habitual improvement. Especially is it so now that my heart can nobly bring thee back to

* See note (p. 346) on the use by Auguste Comte of the terms Philosophy and Religion.

life, and above all, since I repeat, date by date, the dear correspondence, which will always remain the best testimony to our incomparable year. The new order will render more important and easier the constant cultivation of all memories, destined henceforth to offer a moral attraction, which will replace that afforded by theological illusions. Positivism, characterised by its power of familiarising us with the widest commemorations, might, at first sight, seem equivocal if its earliest adherents could not employ it worthily for their dearest affections of private life. The conjugal adoration of my unchangeable widowhood offers in this respect, an illustration, the more decisive because in no wise exclusive, since our pure tenderness reminds me all the more vividly of bonds long severed by death, but especially of my loving mother, who would have appreciated thee so highly.

My yearly offering to thee, deserved though melancholy, brings home to me the sweet influence which henceforth assures complete harmony between my private and public life. For this I thanked thee in my first outburst of feeling,* and it subsequently became the chief object of the frequent explanations by which I sought to overcome thy touching scruples.† The present annual offering for a moment restores to my heart the serene activity it gained two years ago from our free confidences and especially from our correspondence. Before completing it, I have seen breathe thy permanent image, for a whole year immovable. I trust this revivification will last, and increase. Thus also I feel disposed soon to begin the important preliminary discourse, which will constitute a summary, completing and perpetuating my important oral exposition of our dear philosophy. What would I not do, my Saint Clotilde, fully to deserve the common tomb, before which, in sign of gratitude, the collective standard of the regenerated West may some day bow.

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

* This refers to Auguste Comte's sixth letter to Clotilde de Vaux, dated 17th of May, 1845. (see p. 8).

† The fears entertained by Clotilde de Vaux that Auguste Comte's attachment to her must interfere with his philosophical labours, as frequently expressed in her letters to him.

My Fourth Saint Clotilde

OUR FINAL IDENTIFICATION

(TO LOVE IS EVEN SWEETER THAN TO BE LOVED !)

Paris, Sunday, 25 *June*, 1848

NOBLE AND TENDER WIFE

Will the emotions caused by public events* permit me at last to make the annual offering, which my duty as a philosopher† obliges me this time to defer ? When ending, last Thursday, this great task with a fitting announcement of my dear Dedication, which proclaimed thy beneficent influence, I reckoned on devoting this Sunday, the earliest available, to showing thee my heart in its latest development, while sweetly testifying my gratitude for thy fresh blessings. Could I, in so brief an interval, have foreseen my participation, though only passive, in this amazing combat, where our brethren and our children fall, hundreds, perhaps thousands of them hastening by their energy and devotedness the definitive advent of the Religion of Humanity ? How I regret having thus allowed our holy anniversary‡ to pass ! But, at that time, it was my duty not to interrupt a capital work, which, more and more, is needed to point out the real termination of this terrible anarchy. I felt assured that thou, always most anxious not to interfere with my public life, wouldst joyfully pardon the delay so incurred. Having now completed the social duty which had the first claim, I can no longer postpone our sacred communing. This was not realised on the prescribed day, but could that justify my passing over the sacred month, commencement of our union and my adoration of thee, without its annual celebration ? Nevertheless, I still hear, at intervals, the ill-omened detonations that yesterday never ceased, not even knowing the result of this bloody conflict, which true science teaches

* Auguste Comte here refers to the insurrection in Paris, June, 1848.

† Publication by Auguste Comte of the *General View of Positivism*.

‡ June 2nd.

me to regard as indication and source of later disturbances. An absolute prohibition, perhaps beneficial, keeps me in our house, and separates me from all friends, allowing our Sophie only a narrow liberty. This indication of death, or inertia, inclines me to occupy the most secluded of my rooms, that which first mournfully attracted thy preference. There I can better offer my conjugal adoration, provided frightful noises do not interrupt this afflicting silence, which to-day I must desire in the midst of active life and development. Besides, all these disturbances recall me, excellent priestess of Humanity, to thee, who wouldst sympathise so deeply, perhaps too deeply for thy delicate organisation. Incoherent and incomplete, my utterance will be unworthy of thee, but thou wilt excuse omissions and imperfections, which spring from the pressure of the public situation. Mayst thou feel satisfaction that my heart has taken refuge with thee, whose inexhaustible charm is my main shield against all tribulations!

In my last annual utterance, I could not yet explain to thee the final mode of our holy union. The year of mourning had just ended, and my heart felt its entrance into a new existence, as yet insufficiently characterised. The trials of that year have now made clear its true nature, so that at last I gather the best fruit of my eternal widowhood.

At first, naturally comparing my situation to that which our catastrophe cut short, I could only feel my misery. Forever deprived of the sweetest human emotions, I had, though very late, begun to taste their charm for the future. Each of us was the victim of exceptional misfortunes. Both approached incomparable and mutual happiness, when we were obliged to abandon it. How, then, could I avoid painfully contrasting my disastrous solitude with the pure and complete happiness which thou hadst prepared for my maturity in compensation for my melancholy youth.

But that comparison, though natural, ought not to prevail. My situation after thy death should not be compared with that which opened to us when we were sundered, but with the state of my heart before our first interview. When this normal comparison was no longer hindered by pain, I began to feel how deeply, in spite of our catastrophe, I shall ever owe to thee my happiness as well as my amelioration. Thus, looking back two years, though not forgetting the delightful prospect then before us, my recollections chiefly suggest comparison between my present

situation and the sad destiny, which, till I knew thee completely, overshadowed my private life. Four years ago, I believed that the purest satisfactions were denied to me. Now my heart forever owes thee an inexhaustible source of sweet and salutary emotions. This powerful reaction on my public life, in the first instance, greatly helped me to develop the true and final character of my philosophy.* But now I also feel their deep influence even on my private life, animating and charming my entire existence. Thus, personal and daily experience brings home to me how deeply true is my final definition of human happiness, private and public, each of which mainly consists in living for others. Our personality is thus regarded as our chief infirmity, though judicious training can greatly reduce its force. More and more do I enjoy the sweetness and merit of perfect fidelity, as being equally necessary for happiness and improvement.

My daily adoration of thee commenced three years ago.† Early developed by thy death, it consoles and ameliorates me more and more, as I introduce new exercises, or give fresh extension to each of them. I will make my holy pilgrimage to thy tomb twice each week, so soon as my material position shall allow me to devote the day on which thou didst expect me,‡ as well as that when I received thy visits.§

This dear adoration has already identified us so much that it banishes the wish, little worthy of us, inspired by the first posthumous celebration of our eternal union. No longer do I need the attraction of sensual dreams, and I congratulate myself on the impossibility of realising them systematically by a fruitless scientific effort. No longer do I feel thy presence in nocturnal lethargy. Henceforward thy charming image accompanies me everywhere, in its varied daily forms, but always with the angelic purity which unalterably marks our union. Thanks to thee, before entering on my second half century,|| I had renounced sensual emotions, while I remained not less susceptible of sweet impressions. Though late in life, I have attained to this high morality, never reached by many, even superior men, the continual growth of universal love, divested of the low impulse, which, owing to our imperfect nature, especially in the male sex, is necessary to give it birth. This transformation has, in my case,

* See note, p. 346 § Wednesday.

† 1845.

|| 1848. Auguste Comte was born on the 19th January, 1798.

‡ Saturday.

lasted long enough to secure its ascendancy, at least under thy abiding protection. Realised at last, constant effort is seldom needed, my habitual feeling being that of its unchanging sweetness. The noblest triumph of human art consists in thus transforming animal instincts, making them the necessary stimulus of our higher feelings, which are usually wanting in energy. This sublime self-control is the last to be gained, but it is also the most valuable gain, and that most capable of being increased. To thee I owe my complete appreciation of it.

Thus my adoration of thee has enabled me to experience fully the satisfaction of self-sacrifice, and the real charm of universal benevolence, even towards our persecutors. Invoking thee, I was led to take the public step, with reference to my greatest enemy,* on which I congratulate myself more and more. Although he did not worthily respond to my spontaneous advances, his moral deficiency does not lessen their sweetness to me. Our dear philosophy is exalted by my effort, which also brings to myself the immediate and unalterable satisfaction of substituting for irritated feeling a kindly disposition.

From thy adoration I have also derived an indirect yet natural reward, which has charmed rather than surprised me, in the unforeseen reconciliation with my family. Should my financial difficulties be timely surmounted, I shall, thanks to thee, at last be able to go and embrace my old father. Soon, perhaps, while always invoking thee, I shall weep on the far-off tomb of my tender mother, who would have so deeply sympathised with thee. May this much wished for satisfaction compensate the suspension of our weekly meetings.† Even supposing my sister's renewal of affection were rather affected than real, I am convinced that my sincerity will, in the end, make her truly affectionate through the charm of good feeling. As she formerly had an attachment, though her love was not returned, the woman in her cannot but be brought back by fraternal intercourse to our former sympathy, the diminution of which, she should desire, as I do, to forget and repair. Thou who didst so fully shew me the perfect ideal of thy sex hast also taught me to appreciate its fundamental excellencies, even in its lowest types.

* Monsieur Arago, after the Republic of 1848. See Auguste Comte's letter to him, *Correspondence inédite*, Tome IV, p. 264.

† Our Master's visits to the grave of Clotilde de Vaux on Wednesdays.

When all rivalry had vanished in the presence of death, a nature such as thine should be best judged by women. Accordingly, all those whom I feel to be well disposed towards my simple effusion, accept our conjugal communings, of which the exceptional purity is manifest. I shall, even in this way, make trial of the lady who, as I told thee, unconsciously, in my early youth, created the germs of love which thou, after their long involuntary slumber, didst develope. I have not seen her since the day of her marriage, two years before thy birth.* Nevertheless, while informing my sister that she has become a grandmother, she implicitly recalls herself to my recollection, and indicates her wish to see me. If she does not duly appreciate our union, she did not deserve my early and innocent attachment. No woman can touch my heart who is not led, by the mere statement of our fate, to cherish thy memory.

Such appreciations affect me all the more that daily experience confirms their efficacy in the case of our good Sophie, who is my companion rather than my domestic. Thy noble soul so fully understood hers that thou couldst treat her as a sister, and for this she still loves thee tenderly. Thou alone didst teach her the entire excellence of thy sex. She was truly worthy to verify and develop such a revelation. Forgetting her own, even her maternal anxieties, she is always, without affectation, devotedly engaged in the cares which she deems due to me. I am grateful to thee for having taught me to exalt the best qualities of the heart above all else, so well that I often feel my moral inferiority to this uninstructed but superior working woman. Though I cannot always emulate her simple impulses, her heart readily understands my own, especially in all that concerns thee. Perhaps the second fruit of her worthy marriage may belong to thy sex. In that case she has thought, as I have, of giving the child thy sweet name. Thus I felt no hesitation in proposing that I should assume for this new Clotilde the paternity which thou hadst shared with me for thy nephew,† though seemingly annulled by his father's insults to me, unless he repents of them. If the event correspond to this near hope, how delightful will it be to bring up in my house this emblem of the happiness which thou didst

* 3 April, 1815. See pp. 161, 365.

† This refers to the baptism conferred on the child of Monsieur and Madame Marie, junior, in the church of St. Paul, rue St. Antoine, Paris, on the 28th of August, 1845, when Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux became god-father and god-mother to the child baptised.

project for *all three*. Supposing thee to be my associate in this new office, I shall only conform to thy own wish. Perhaps calumny will blacken this factitious paternity, which might, though inadequately, fill the place of my domestic deficiencies. But my purity could set at naught these attacks, which, in the end, would recoil on their authors. Our union will secure me against them, more and more, as its deep influence on my public life shall be made manifest.

Thy name will soon be associated with mine by the increasing gratitude of those who are eminent in heart and mind. Without waiting for my solemn Dedication,* my next publication† will show how much the moral development of Positivism is indebted to thee. All will feel that, before knowing thee, I could not have systematically given the first place to the social point of view which specially concerns women. The final worship of Humanity will appear in its true character as adoration, public and private, of the loving sex, whose members are the best personifications of the true Great Being, and the natural source of the spiritual power which is thus made the necessary foundation for regeneration. These salutary principles are profoundly real, but their discovery was due not more to my intellect than to my heart, which thou hast renovated.

Thy influence, fully recognised by all my friends, was understood last year by our noble audience of working men and women.‡ Henceforth Western Europe will recognise this, observing that my fundamental discourse on Positivism is characterised by feeling, which preponderates over intellect and action. In this result who can overlook thy admirable inspiring influence?

I congratulate myself on having already ventured to allude, though indirectly, to our common tomb, which I shall claim as my chief reward at the close of my great work.§ Perhaps I shall live long enough to witness the beginning of that joint adoration, reserved for us by the true Supreme Being, whose advent I proclaim. Justice is more readily done to the dead than to the living, and naturally a woman is less jealously considered. Our young disciples have, of their own accord, inspired the hope that, so soon as I can make others appreciate thee sufficiently,

* This, though written in 1846, after the death of Clotilde de Vaux, was not published until 1851 (*Positive Polity*, Vol. I).

† *General View of Positivism*, 1848. (Reprinted in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I).

‡ At Auguste Comte's Public Lectures, 1847.

§ *Positive Polity*, 1851-1854. See the conclusion of Vol. IV.

the Positivist Virgin will be worthily honoured. May the day arrive when I can see Humanity portrayed on the banner of the West by thy holy image.

All social movements which are truly ripe, especially when systematic, are so wonderfully rapid that this noble and delightful utopia may be realised during my life. Such a celebration of thee would be certain if some eminent woman, putting aside rivalry, should worthily set forth thy mental and moral fitness to represent the highest feminine type. Endeavouring to satisfy the essential conditions of the new worship, I have impartially sought, in the past, for a true personification of woman. But my sacerdotal reflections have always brought me back to thee. In no one else could I discover that complete harmony of feeling and intellect which thou hast portrayed in thy touching *Lucie*.*

Misunderstood by a family unworthy of thee, my Clotilde, thou didst not realise thy mental superiority. The deep remarks that so naturally escaped thy pen in our incomparable correspondence—some of them cited in my Discourse—will teach good judges that thy noble intelligence was not characterised only by gracefulness and sagacity. Thou wert better acquainted with the true greatness of thy heart, although some remnants of metaphysics hindered a full appreciation of thy spontaneous benevolence, especially of thy unwearying and active indulgence, even towards thy oppressors.

Could any other woman of note offer such an admirable union of ease with dignity, such purity free from prudery? But so long as thy excellent qualities are proclaimed only by myself, my high estimate will be attributed to love, whereas it was mainly dictated by justice, for our union merely enabled me to know thee better. I trust, however, that tender hearts and delicate minds will feel the high merit, mental and moral, of thy one esthetic publication. When this shall be reproduced as the supplement to my dear Dedication, with the exceptional composition† which opened the new phase of Positivism, followed by thy sweet canzone,‡ it will doubtless show that my praise is wholly deserved. The spontaneous comparison of this happy preamble with my chief book§ may lead careful readers to understand the unconscious share

* Printed in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

† *Letter on Social Commemoration*, by Auguste Comte. His first Saint Clotilde. (see page 303).

‡ *Les Pensees d'une Fleur*. See page 164.

§ *Positive Polity*, 4 Vols., 1851-54.

in my final and systematic work which my conscientious gratitude attributes to thee.

Nevertheless, a feminine pen alone can definitively celebrate thy apotheosis. Such only can be above suspicion of prejudice or condescension. Besides, thy sex is the best judge of the true type of woman. Still, while acknowledging that such sanction is as needful as it is difficult of attainment, I trust all rivalry will yield to thy sweet pre-eminence. I do not consider a silly and degrading emulation as being inseparable from the feminine nature. It arises from the want of public life, which is calculated to restrain personal conflicts. So soon as women shall have clearly realised the essential mission which Positivism assigns them, they will elevate their sex to its just height. Then they will feel the necessity of putting aside all personal rivalry in order to manifest their true nature.

My next publication should, I think, considerably hasten this just consecration of thee. The select circle of which I am the systematic centre has already prepared itself for this by the sympathy shown for my noble sorrow on the first anniversary of our fatal separation. However, I felt it right to dispense with generous but premature suggestions intended to attract the hearts of proletaries or priests to a direct adoration of the Positivist Virgin. Such observances should be spontaneous and not hastened by any systematic effort. But my fundamental discourse may well dispose them that way. Already thy name will be distinctly invoked by me before those who will shortly celebrate, at least by their silent presence, the first Positivist marriage. Soon one of our estimable sons will unite himself with a simple-minded Catholic. Both of these proletaries ask for my sanction as a priest. In accomplishing this private and delightful office, which inaugurates the new worship, may I not invoke thy holy name by mentioning the fact that thou hadst consecrated thy adorable talents to a defence in principle of the true marriage tie ?*

All these considerations give me reason to hope that Positivism will honour thy memory, as the best personification of the feminine type, in the second of the principal festivals† instituted for the worship of Humanity. May I be able to promote the regeneration

* *Lucie*, printed in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

† The second Positive festival is that of the Virgin-Mother, adopting the Catholic date, 15th August. The first festival our Master established for the New Year : the last for the Day of all the Dead (31 December), with, in Leap Year, the Festival of Holy Women.

of the West sufficiently to feel confident of this unequalled reward before our bodies shall be united for ever as closely as will soon be our common fame.*

Although this rapid outpouring shows many signs of present public agitation, I congratulate myself on my perseverance in completing it to-day. It has enabled me to forget, during some hours, the painful emotions which surround me.†

Despite of its special imperfections, this effusion of my heart will, as ever, promote my personal regeneration no less than my personal consolation.

Thus am I indebted to thee for finding some pure satisfaction in a dreadful crisis. The deadly sounds of the last two days, still too often repeated this morning, seem to have at last disappeared. Though mingled with warlike sounds, I already hear indications that the human metropolis is returning to its normal condition. The carnage on both sides may have ceased, at least till the next conflict, which will be still more terrible, unless the working men now in arms shall have discovered their real camp.

My performance of a delightful duty, the unavoidable postponement of which I regret, will allow me to read to thee this renewed conjugal offering a second time, before the end of the month‡ sacred to thee. May this re-perusal be undisturbed by mournful detonations, which so greatly exceed the painful impression experienced by me four months earlier at thy holy tomb.§

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

P.S.—(*Tuesday, 27 June*) To-day I am reviewing this exceptional utterance, and I am explaining to myself the possibility of my writing it without feeling any unworthy indifference towards the serious public interests so seriously compromised. That, my holy Clotilde, was owing to the admirable unity which thou hast unconsciously created between my private and my public life. So complete is now their harmony that to seek my personal happiness means also to labour for my moral improvement. Later I have systematised for others this connection between private with public life, which,

* This has reference to Auguste Comte's hope of a joint tomb. See pp. 390, 478.

† The insurrection of June, 1848, in Paris.

‡ June.

§ This refers to the revolution of February, 1848, when Louis Philippe was dethroned.

before I knew thee, was unknown to me, but now constitutes one of the essential foundations of Positivism. All that awakens and strengthens our tenderness, which directly reposes on universal love, must contribute to the great aim of the human synthesis, the preponderance of sociability over personality. Such ultimate ascendancy can only be realised by moral progress, which must begin with those special sympathies alone able at the outset to overcome our fundamental egoism. My worship of thee continually impresses me with the efficacy of this education of the heart. The more I adore thee, my Clotilde, the greater is the progress I make of every kind in the inexhaustible work of my moral improvement. Far from deadening my love for Humanity, thou hast rendered her more dear to me, since I see her image in thee. Inversely, every effort at self-improvement increases my conjugal affection, which thus becomes more precious to me. Even my recent advances in sobriety and chastity react on my holy love by imparting greater clearness to my imagination, and greater delicacy to my tenderness. Each is bound up with all in the normal life, the future type of which thou hast, though unconsciously, so greatly helped to develop for me.

My Fifth Saint Clotilde

THY IRREVOCABLE INCORPORATION WITH THE
TRUE GREAT BEING

(TRUE HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN LIVING FOR OTHERS)

Begun on Thursday, 11 St. Paul 61, continued on the morrow, and finished the day after ; to be read the next Wednesday at the Holy Tomb

Paris, Thursday, 31 May, 1849 (11 St. Paul, 61)*
NOBLE AND TENDER WIFE

Here then is our third annual outpouring after the time when the end of my year of mourning has allowed me to institute definitively an affectionate exchange of our hearts. Already has our final identification, which last year I described to thee, attained its true nature by a noble publicity,[†] a worthy prelude to the solemn explanations reserved for my dear Dedication.[‡] Everything has confirmed the happy anticipation then expressed that the intimate help afforded by thee to my chief advance in philosophy would soon be appreciated by the public. All feel with me, that my theory of woman§ forms the most decisive feature of the characteristic work for the completion of which I was obliged to delay our last celebration. No other portion of my work has more completely gained the profound assent of both sexes. All recognise the angelic impulse without which I might never have effected

* The Historical Calendar constructed by Auguste Comte was first published in April, 1849, by the Positivist Society. Our Master in later editions, made some minor alterations in it, withdrawing and adding certain names. His final revision is printed in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV., p. 348. It dates the modern *transitional* era from the commencement of the French Revolution, 1789—that is twelve years before the end of the eighteenth century. He began to employ the new era soon after its publication, in 1840—as appears from his fifth Saint Clotilde,—adding the corresponding date of the Civil Calendar used in Western Europe. He continued this practice from the Fifth till the Twelfth Saint Clotilde, 1856, which was the last he lived to write, owing to the long and severe illness that ended in his death on the 5th of September, 1857.

† This refers to Auguste Comte's lectures of 1847, first published 1848, reprinted in *Positive Polity*, Vol. I, part 1, 1851.

‡ This was published in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

§ This forms the fourth chapter of the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I, General View.

this capital progress, due to the heart still more than to the intellect. This holy reaction, henceforward undeniable, puts aside the scruples naturally engendered by my unhappy domestic situation as regards my great Dedication. It is already justified by thy influence, indirect but salutary, on my sacerdotal construction. Although the time has not yet come for such a solemn manifestation,* this sweet preliminary success inspires me with a renewed desire to express, now and in the secrecy of our hearts, my inexhaustible gratitude, always inadequate to the benefits I receive from thee. Experience also makes me sure that this private adoration will bring me further improvement. While reorganising an assiduous culture of the heart, so sadly neglected in our day, I ought more and more to use for my own benefit the counsels I recommend to others, which have already been so profitable to myself.

Since our last inter-communication, the principle of universal love, of which I owe to thee the clear recognition, has at last assumed the shape best adapted to its systematic destination. Positivism is openly preached as the *Religion of Humanity*. This final designation has been so widely accepted that I may congratulate myself on having ventured to unite the name with the reality, thus directly instituting an avowed rivalry with all other faiths. Henceforward Positivism, as regards doctrine, morals, and worship, is condensed in the irrevocable advent of the true Great Being, the spontaneous centre of our feelings, thoughts and actions.

This new Supreme Being, alone real and lasting, necessarily comprehends all elements worthy of honour, for these alone can be truly assimilated. Far from being a vague and incoherent assemblage of human individuals, Humanity embraces all organs of the eternal evolution, material, mental, and above all, moral. We must therefore exclude all that in no way aided this great evolution, all those parasites that transmit to their successors no return for the benefits received from their predecessors. The organs of the Supreme Being that can be fully appreciated are then the Dead; with a few of the living whose participation in the universal life may be confidently assumed. The entire existence of each person should tend towards final incorporation with the Great Being. This must depend on the whole life, and is a certainty for all who have lived worthily.

* The Dedication was not published till 1851.

Thus, besides the valuable influence on my chief progress, thy holy life and its lasting traces, though sadly brief, will guarantee for thyself this eternal consecration, provided I can sufficiently ensure the appreciation of thy undoubted claims. In this way my private affection is worthily associated with the new public worship. Both as thy true husband, and as the first priest of Humanity, I owe thee profound and habitual adoration as an admirable personification of the Supreme Being, who can only be represented by her best individual organs. True social inspiration, when it shall preponderate, will soon make the chief merit of each person consist in this symbolical representation, such being the necessary result of incorporation. Then my special adoration of thee will be fully respected, and even sincerely supported, by all who have judged us justly.

Thy personal consecration is more directly assured by the solemn adoration of womanhood, which the final religion makes the necessary prelude to the systematic worship of *Humanity*, and its constant stimulant. Since I have announced the definitive advent of this adoration, all noble hearts and sound intellects have increasingly appreciated this essential preparation, so admirably initiated by chivalrous instinct. The judgment of all will make thy fitness to represent one of the best feminine types distinctly felt. Thy early development was fatally interrupted, but it has left traces which, even apart from my testimony, show in thee a combination, perhaps unexampled, of the chief womanly qualities, mental as well as moral. Under what better form could I illustrate the characteristic tendency of the adoration of womanhood to the direct development of our most important amelioration through deep and habitual exercise of the benevolent sympathies?

But, my holy Clotilde, thou, as the principle type of womanhood, dost generously inspire me to associate with thee two other objects of my grateful affection. Already thou knowest that the moral germs of the late development which I owe to thee, sprang from a tender and devoted mother, who would have fully felt thy worth. Equally unhappy, though in a different way, as thyself, she obtained years of life which thou didst never reach, yet did not taste those deep satisfactions of the heart she so well deserved. My gratitude to thee naturally inspired grateful feeling for the holy preparation which I owe

to my poor ROSALIE,* who was deprived of my filial endearments twenty-two years ago—ten years before she expired. On thy own tomb I must venerate her remains which rest far away,† though culpable indifference would, alas, prevent my ascertaining the spot. Thus each week the son's adoration of his mother succeeds that of his wife.

Turning now to our chaste hearth, I there at once find a third admirable personification,‡ happily still alive, of the feminine type. She is the incomparable domestic whom thou didst nobly treat as a sister, and who has not ceased to appreciate thee deeply. Her complete want of artificial cultivation brings out more clearly the chief attribute of woman, her natural tendency to consecrate the intellect to the direct service of the heart. Every day I admire this happy disposition, which, in her modest sphere spontaneously suggests for my benefit many delicate improvements that never would occur to me. Since I have definitively installed her estimable husband, and their excellent son,§ her touching happiness only wants the return of her baby.|| Her habitual contentment makes more clear the true object of philosophy, to consolidate and develop human harmony by binding it to the universal order. Our daily intercourse, above all, shows me how far, in private life, spontaneous devotedness usually surpasses the best systematic training. Thus I taste the intimate sweetness of the affectionate utopia planned by thee for *us three*.

This touching project having failed, I more and more endeavour to realise the moral regeneration, begun for me by a tender mother, developed by the holy wife, and daily promoted, though unconsciously, by my noble domestic, who truly deserves to be associated with the other two immortal memories. ROSALIE, CLOTILDE, SOPHIE, your virtuous group, henceforward inseparable, presents to me the best type of the true nature of woman. Always thus inspired, I can more fully systematise the public and private influence of the loving sex as the chief basis of the final renovation. She who survives unconsciously recalls the holy impulse

* Madame Comte (born Rosalie Boyer), the mother of Auguste Comte, who died on the 3rd of March, 1837.

† At Montpellier, her home, and the birthplace of Auguste Comte.

‡ Madame Martin Thomas (born Sophie Bliaux), adopted by Comte as his daughter. See *Uma Visita aos Lugares Santos do Positivismo*, p. 118, and *O ano sem par*, written by Senhor R. T. Mendes of Rio de Janeiro, vice-director of Positivism in Brazil. Both works contain much valuable information collected by his exertions during his visits to France.

§ This was their eldest son.

|| The second son Paul. See p. 419.

of the two others by the sweet and abiding spectacle of our normal condition, activity and intelligence freely subordinated to feeling! May my just gratitude, publicly manifested, finally make your three names alike inseparable from mine for a grateful posterity. I shall venture to end my religious construction* by publicly charging my disciples of both sexes to obtain, some day, as the chief reward of my services, my solemn interment amid you three, in one occidental tomb, beneath the statue of the true Great Being, with whom we shall thenceforth be irrevocably incorporated.

Following this general outpouring, I owe to thee, my Clotilde, a brief account of my various emotions since thy last Saint's-day.† Besides their own charms, these solemn conversations tend to regulate my personal system, since, thanks to thee, my public life is intimately bound up with my private life!

Notwithstanding its inadequate publicity, the decisive composition‡ which so happily indicated thy influence, has already shown the true character of the final religion, the great work where I shall worthily develop this systematic introduction. Positivism having thus reached maturity, that construction may easily include the principal conceptions of the three other treatises§ promised by me, in case a hard destiny should prevent their execution in due course. Especially have I anxiously awaited the judgment of thy sex on my theory of woman, which is the principal basis of Positivism. Now on this head, adhesion, moral and intellectual, has been unanimous, even with those who in other respects seem to repel the new synthesis. Thus the Positivist priesthood, from its birth, has obtained a feminine sanction, more complete and efficacious than that which so greatly aided the Catholic priesthood.

This characteristic publication was soon followed by three pamphlets.|| In these, inspired by our grave situation, I have already announced the principal measures required for the transitional period of the West, without awaiting their systematic exposition in my second great work. I congratulate myself

* *Positive Polity*, conclusion, Vol. IV.

† June 3rd, 1848.

‡ *General View of Positivism*, 1848.

§ On Mathematics (afterwards described as Logic), on Morals, and on Industry.

|| On Government, on the Positive School, and the Historical Calendar. To these was added later a fourth pamphlet on Work. In February, 1848, Louis Philippe was dethroned and a Republic proclaimed, but revolutionary movements continued.

on having associated these secondary writings with the regenerated family* growing up around me. The mode of publication may suggest that these plans were conceived by men who, however, only expounded them, but my personal abnegation will hasten the social growth of Positivism. After having in this way indicated the revolutionary government suitable for the present situation, and the philosophic school destined as a preparation for future times, I have completed this transitional system by organising the concrete worship of the past. The Positivist Calendar, which seems to be overcoming the culpable silence of the Press, tenderly recalls the exceptional composition† which was my affectionate prelude to the above historic construction on the occasion of our first interview, the true beginning of my new life. In conformity with my promise then made, thy Patron Saint‡ is irrevocably incorporated with the final worship, which only changes the day of celebration. At first an excusable temptation suggested my adding thee to the small number of feminine types thus honoured by immortality in the West. But, before anyone had known of the sacred Table,§ I nobly overcame this sweet impulse, notwithstanding thy just claim to such an apotheosis, for reasons other than thy powerful reaction on myself; thy normal celebration belongs only to that worship of the future which thou couldst so well have prepared, even apart from thy powerful influence on me. Some day thy holy name should be celebrated in association with mine, while associating thee with the past tended to separate us. Possibly I may live long enough to enjoy this noble solidarity with thee, the chief reward of all my labours.

Our theory of woman, even before its publication, received its earliest sanction in practice more decidedly than I announced to thee last year. I duly celebrated a true positivist marriage, when the husband|| and wife, touchingly exhorted by me as priest, freely accepted the mutual obligations of eternal widowhood, their tears being mingled with those

* Each of these pamphlets was composed, on lines which Auguste Comte suggested, by a member of the Positivist Society, founded in 1848 by Auguste Comte, described as above by him.

† *Letter on Social Commemoration*, dated 2nd June, 1845, written by Auguste Comte to Madame de Vaux, and called by him his First Saint Clotilde. See p. 303.

‡ Saint Clotilde. Her day in the Catholic Church is the 3rd of June. In the Historical Calendar of Positivism she is placed on the 22nd day of the month of Charlemagne, which corresponds to the 9th of July, or in Leap Year to the 8th of the same month.

§ The Historical Calendar composed by Auguste Comte, first published separately but printed afterwards in the *Positive Polity* Vol. IV.

|| M. Francelle.

of the audience. My tears overcame me so that I could not invoke aloud thy holy name. But this expressive silence was well understood, especially when those present became aware how deeply thou hadst contributed to the success of this first experience. This estimable couple, from the working classes, will soon invoke my sacerdotal office to incorporate their first-born with regenerated Humanity. Then, I hope, a less powerful emotion may allow me sweetly to name the virtuous colleague who will always aid my good inspirations.

Soon after this, my first act of pontifical authority, I loyally endeavoured, as I have already intimated to thee, to renew my youthful relations with the lady who, two years before thy birth,* unconsciously called forth my youthful love. But the result has not corresponded to my holy perseverance. Her first reply, long delayed, was followed by seven months of unaccountable silence towards my prompt response, though its charms would seem to have been felt at first. I therefore abandon my hope of obtaining a sincere affection, of the kind in which, even when weak, thou hast taught me to find true happiness. Her original hauteur, attributed by me to noble birth, was mostly due to pride, and thus finally degenerated into aristocratic hardness. Besides, theological antipathies increase, nay rather prompt, this coldness towards a philosopher now bereft of official authority.

Perhaps this disappointment may be compensated by the young disciple† who, for several months, has seemed to promise useful help for me as a priest, provided her duties as a mother sufficiently corrected her apparent levity. Although her heart appears worthy of her intellect, another case prevents my interpreting her remarkable assiduity as a decided adhesion. By offering to her thy touching *Lucie*, I have recently put her sincerity to the best test. Should feminine rivalry hinder her appreciation of thee, I shall not rely on co-operation of a sort merely intellectual. Any woman who cannot feel how much thy characteristic first work has helped my final construction, does not deserve to be associated with it. Although not yet aware how this communication has affected her, the delay makes me doubtful of the result. Should it succeed, the best initiation of this new priestess of *Humanity* would be her sincere appreciation, oral or written, of the loss which thy death caused to the great regeneration. Such proof alone could justify my transferring to her

* See pp. 161, 353.

† Mme. Guichard.

the eminent co-operation which I reserved for thee, in guiding the southern inhabitants of the West, through the heart, to become the chief support of the final religion. Though I have temporarily confided this noble assistance to some young disciples worthy of it, I have always felt it fully belongs only to thy sex.

These various efforts to ensure the only solution suitable for our anarchical state have, during the last three months, been concentrated in my renewed weekly preaching, henceforth avowedly devoted to its great destination. The obstinate conspiracy of silence* does not prevent a select public, few but fit, from following, with characteristic zeal, my laborious improvisations, which last four hours, on the most important of subjects. Among this exceptional auditory, representing every social element of the West, the remarkable assiduity of some ladies has caused me sadly to distinguish the persevering presence of her who little deserves my name.† Her artificial and egoistic nature makes me doubtful as to her chief motive for this unforeseen adhesion. Perhaps her revolutionary disposition, matured by age and enlightened by the public situation, has inspired her with some real warmth for the doctrine of which she witnessed the birth, without appreciating it. This tardy conversion would then compare with the far deeper influence exercised by me on the energetic old man‡ whom I lost some weeks after thee. But I incline to attribute this strange success chiefly to an insane hope of gradually obtaining, in this manner, her return to the home which she finally abandoned two years§ before my first meeting with my only real wife.|| While appreciating the adhesion of one so distinguished intellectually, I shall carefully avoid a renewal of any personal intercourse. To a letter which aimed at this, I briefly replied in a philosophical sense. Two other letters, more direct, I did not answer, being firmly resolved never to alter my attitude. Let her devote to the new faith her eminent talents for discussion and propaganda. Then I shall be more pleased than any other Positivist, for I understand better the value of such co-operation. But she will not be able thus to draw me into any of her meetings whatever on this subject. I feel too keenly that my tardily gained

* Auguste Comte here refers to the general silence of the newspapers in France as regards Positivism.

† Madame Comte.

‡ Monsieur Charles Bonnin.

§ August, 1842.

|| In October, 1844, Auguste Comte first met Clotilde de Vaux, but their intimate friendship only began in the early part of 1845.

quiet, equally needed for my mission and for my health, dates only from the day when I was blamelessly released from this fatal bond, which, during the last seven years, could impose only pecuniary duties. My new life, public and private, will always begin with the holy ultimate union in which alone I could foresee a possibility of conjugal happiness compatible with my exceptional destiny. The sacred adoration which, for three years past, has been, more and more, my heart's best resource, will always be preserved from any heterogeneous contacts. But under the daily inspiration of thy virtuous influence, I have resolved to grant her last appeal should she ever ask me for a final meeting. Except in this one case, her presence each week will only ensure my just reserve, in public, towards thy holy memory, which I have already sufficiently indicated as an object of veneration for Positivists, pending the solemn explanations of my Dedication.

Our last festival was followed by a fresh disaster* : a sad proof of how little I can expect personal sympathy from my philosophical adherents, and from those who could understand what the loss of my examinership meant to me. The Polytechnic School, degenerate in heart as well as in intellect, has shown itself unworthy of the honour done by my identification with it, which I shall henceforth disown. Still more do I regret the cowardly egoism of the thinker,† formerly eminent, whose scientific merits I praised too highly, and on whom now falls the moral degradation which follows theological backsliding. But I have felt almost as great surprise at finding the same insensibility in my native city. Alas, I cannot disguise from myself the faults of my own family who are responsible for a desertion which they could easily have prevented. The loyal reconciliation I accorded to my sister deserved a different conduct. This unexpected crisis shows too plainly the radical indifference indicated, during the last year, by her tardy and cold letters, a few affected displays of feeling corresponding so ill to my warm brotherly effusions. However, I shall maintain the same attitude during my father's lifetime, though without hoping for any habitual return of affection. In addition to the usual charm of good feelings, even when these are not reciprocated, I should carefully avoid losing my poor father, whilst in the sad

* This fresh disaster referred to was our Master's loss of his position as the chief teacher of mathematics in an important school in Paris. (*See Correspondence inédite d' A. Comte*, Vols. IV, pp. 274-5 ; III, p. 63, III, p. 25).

† Monsieur de Blainville. *See* Auguste Comte's Funeral Discourse on him, *Positive Polity*, Tome I.

isolation which made me feel so sadly for my good mother, though my own attitude towards her was irreproachable. But when the time of his death does come, I shall urge my sister to give me a decisive explanation, and no consideration will induce me to keep up false relations. Even assuming her Catholicism to be entirely sincere, her commonplace intellect would not account for her present conduct, if her heart were truly sisterly.

With so many unforeseen defections I can happily contrast the noble zeal which my latest deprivation of employment has spontaneously aroused. It will be no surprise to thee that our excellent Sophie leads the way in these incomparable compensations. Day by day acquainted with all my vicissitudes, she has urged me, during the last two years, to borrow the modest savings due to her service with me. This time I could not refuse her touching request, already sincerely confirmed by her excellent husband. Soon after this my dangerous position impelled my distinguished philosophical colleague* to institute for me a noble protection of a public character, which was thoroughly well received by our estimable brethren, especially by working men. Loyal adherents in Holland have subsequently proved themselves to be sincere Positivists, by co-operating in this honourable patronage, notwithstanding their previous generosity in favour of my characteristic publication.†

Thus I have been placed in a new way of life, which, though as yet inadequate for my sustenance, will not prevent its speedy efficacy to defeat a disgraceful persecution. This entire consecration of my life to the foundation of Positivism now permits me to accept, without any idle scruples, the very small, but habitual, contributions of each true Positivist. Provided their intervention is openly declared, I should feel more honoured by regularly depending on subscriptions of one centime each day. Such co-operation would afford me the best pledge of the decisive advent of the new faith, and a just pattern of the normal morals it should establish in the West. Collective support of the contemplative by the active class, requires, at the outset, the free intervention of real individual convictions, which so long constituted the chief support of the old priesthood.

* Monsieur Littré instituted (12 Nov., 1848) the annual subscription for the support of our Master, who afterwards (1850) converted it into the *Subside Sacerdotal*. See the Appendix to Dr. Robinet's *Notice sur la vie et l'œuvre d' A. Comte*.

† *General View of Positivism*.

Until this new personal security has been effected on my behalf, it is possible that selfishness, hatred, and treachery may continue to increase my financial difficulties. But, whatever degree these may reach, thy touching example and my potent invocation of thee will still maintain my unfailing equanimity, on which depends the exceptional vitality needed for my great mission. Increasing age, far from diminishing my generous indifference to self, makes me systematically feel its natural wisdom. My head of hair, which is almost youthful, at an age of general greyness sufficiently proves that my way of life is reasonable. I have always felt that time works unceasingly for my triumph, which I shall assuredly enjoy if my sacerdotal life lasts long enough. Now personal freedom from anxious forethought, in the case of a philosopher who ought only to consider the future of society, is the chief condition of such an active and long life.

I am then ready, my Clotilde, to suffer with dignity such new troubles as may arise. I even promise thee if necessary, to go so far as to sacrifice the holy home so closely bound up with our precious worship, and which, moreover, offers to the adherents of the new faith a kind of preliminary temple. Great as is the value which my heart attaches to this sacred seat of our chaste intimacy, I shall have courage to leave it, should my situation demand the sacrifice. My worship is now so fully established that my holy images of thee would easily accompany me to any place where I might be led by the recollection of thy last prudential exhortations. Yet I still hope to avoid this melancholy step, the gravity of which is so fully understood in my circle that my daily prayers may perhaps be preserved from such a passing disturbance.

While ending this annual outpouring, I appreciate more clearly the incomparable harmony which I owe to thee in every aspect of my life. Religious Positivism really began with our precious interview of Friday, the 16th May, 1845, when my heart unexpectedly announced, before thy astonished family, the characteristic saying: 'We cannot always think, but we can always love,' which, when completed,* became the special maxim of our great composition.† In spite of this original connexion, ever more developed since then, thy scrupulous delicacy, on the contrary, made thee always fear causing any disturbance to a career which indeed, was deeply ameliorated by thy virtuous influence.

* We cannot always think, or even act, but we can always love.

† *General View of Positivism.*

Thy last letter, which my heart repeats at length twice each day, reproduces these tender misgivings inspired by thy admirable modesty. If thou couldst now contemplate the philosophic fruit of my moral regeneration, thou wouldst at last feel reassured, and for ever set aside those obsolete theories, which, misunderstanding human unity, pretend to explain the intellect apart from the heart.

In less than six years after my fundamental work,* in which Positivism seemed exclusively destined for scientific thought, now appears the decisive Discourse, in which the entire construction unexpectedly rests on the preponderance of the heart, thus becoming specially suitable for women. This unexampled progress is essentially due to thee, my Clotilde, although, alas, thou couldst not co-operate in it, or hardly foresee it, notwithstanding my having constantly declared its reality. Had my passion been less pure or less deep, I could not have devoted my highest intellectual capacity to the final systematisation of the normal future. The Middle Ages, notwithstanding their doctrinal weakness and insufficient sociability, made an admirable, though premature, commencement of that final harmony by which reason and activity, duly subordinated to feeling, should always confirm and develop the affections, in accordance with their relations to the universal order. This vast mediæval prelude has sufficiently indicated the aim for our direct progress towards it to be assured ; all the mental and social preparations having been adequately effected since that great epoch. Such is the fundamental mission which thou hast so fully matured for me. It requires, above all, a permanent co-operation between the worthy priest (philosopher or poet) and the holy woman (wife or mother).

The true intellectual system itself calls for this intimate alliance, which, by utilising the past as a whole, can alone institute the final logic, composed of feelings, images, and signs. Henceforward abstract expression, ideal representation, and affective impression will aid each other systematically, according to the appreciable laws of their natural harmony. Each in its turn will contribute to the habitual improvement of human thought, hitherto abandoned to empirical impulses. This definitive consecration of intellect to social aims had to be first realised in myself, through our holy union, before it could be

* *Positive Philosophy*, completed in 1842.

regulated and formulated for others. When about to commence my lectures of 1846, in which thy influence was already so deep, I expressed my conviction to thee in this characteristic passage: '*Your noble ascendancy has closely bound the habitual growth of my highest thoughts with that of my tenderest feelings.*' This intimate connexion has so entirely formed the natural basis of the final religion that, each Sunday when I mount the pontifical seat,* my heart repeats this very formula in presence of thy ideal image. My lasting gratitude, daily, weekly, and yearly, will only present the ever new development of this inexhaustible subject, which already dominates the whole of our precious correspondence.

Nothing but such personal experience could adequately justify my philosophic recommendations as to the practice of feminine adoration, which is the indispensable preparation, public and private, for the systematic worship of *Humanity*. Thus I can better explain the sweetness and benefits of an exercise of which I every day feel the deep efficacy, both mental and moral. The great Alfred devoted each day eight hours to his life of contemplation. Assuredly this concerned the heart much more than the intellect, and no one would venture to think that his vast activity ever lost by it. Why should not a true philosopher adopt an equivalent practice in our day?

During the three years in which I have finally organised my worship of thee, I have been naturally led to develop it more in proportion as I felt more deeply its various advantages. Although unable, as I hoped, to pay a second weekly visit to thy tomb, I have in fact realised its equivalent by gradually doubling the time consecrated to our dear Wednesday. My two daily prayers have likewise gained a corresponding extension, so that I specially devote to thee the beginning and end of each day, besides the first instants of every exceptional awakening.

These constant exercises have already gained for me every sort of inward progress. To such a degree do they facilitate my habitual purity that, without any great effort, I can observe the strict chastity required for eternal widowhood. My imagination thus becomes more clear and lively, first towards thee, then in all other respects. My lofty meditations are more fully directed to their chief destination, since the worship of *Humanity* has become more deeply bound up with my adoration of thee. All these

* This refers to our Master's lectures on Positivism, which were always delivered on Sunday.

habitual tendencies towards human unity improve even my physical health, by imparting a charm to my way of life which is unavoidably austere.

I should never end, my Clotilde, could I worthily portray thy complete influence on my second life. Although this annual homage has again been enlarged, I regret having to terminate it in order to make the necessary preparations for my weekly discourse. The very time of ending this effusion reminds me of our intimate union as its necessary basis. Last Sunday I appreciated the general efficacy of Catholic beliefs in the Middle Ages ; to-morrow, the very day of thy holy festival,* I shall celebrate the corresponding estimate of feudal manners. Could I then harmonise my personal life with my public office better than by renewing my adoration towards her who offered to me an admirable combination of nobility and tenderness, the twofold characteristic of true chivalrous sentiment ? I feel that even the approaching continuation of my great religious construction† will be aided by this sweet conjugal communion, which, reviving all my highest faculties, concentrates them more completely on the service of the Great Being, of whom thou dost irrevocably form a part. Thus it only remains that I should repeat to thee, with deep convictions, the enthusiastic declaration which, during the past year, has begun and ended my day : *' This worship of love and gratitude will never cease to console me, and above all, to improve me.'*

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

(Saturday, 13 St Paul, 61)

* 3rd June, 1849.

† The *Positive Polity*.

My Sixth Saint Clotilde

THE FINAL WORSHIP OF THEE

LOVE FOR PRINCIPLE ; ORDER FOR BASIS AND PROGRESS FOR END

Begun on 7 St. Paul 62 ; continued on the morrow, and finished the day after ;
to be read the next Wednesday at the Holy Tomb.

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY]

Paris, 7 *St. Paul*, 62, *St. Augustine* !
(Monday, 27 *May*, 1850)

NOBLE AND TENDER WIFE

On the like date, five years ago, the outburst of my deeply moved heart gave birth to the holy composition,* private and public, which naturally combined the commencement of my worship of thee, with the direct institution of religious Positivism. During the whole of our incomparable year,† this natural alliance was fully and happily shown throughout our fruitful correspondence. The fatal catastrophe‡ suspended this harmonious development during the period of mourning, when thy eternal existence gradually replaced thy temporary life. But even during that sorrowful year my exceptional Dedication§ directly set forth this unexampled connexion. From thy third|| festival I was thus able to commemorate both thy definite new birth and my lasting purification. Our communion of the following year¶ particularly consecrated our full identification on the completion of the religious foundation in which thou hast so largely helped me, and the prompt publication of which allowed me even then to proclaim our virtuous united effort. Thus decisively

* Letter to Clotilde de Vaux on Social Commemoration. See p. 303

† 1845-6.

‡ The death of Clotilde, 5th April, 1846.

§ 4th October, 1846, printed in the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

|| Third Saint-Clotilde, 2nd June, 1847.

¶ Fourth Saint-Clotilde, 25th June, 1848.

inaugurated, I last year solemnly systematised thy irrevocable incorporation with the true Great Being. F. I.

These different preparations now lead me up to the institution of thy true adoration, which henceforward cannot be separated from the universal religion. Since the year of mourning ended, daily experience, during three years, has allowed me to appreciate adequately its private efficacy as well for my inward progress as for my habitual consolation. This spontaneous feeling now gains a nobler character and greater depth by becoming systematically bound up with the ultimate religion. Thou, as profoundly incorporated* with Humanity, dost offer to me her best familiar personification. The worship of Woman, of which the modern idea was admirably anticipated by the instinct of the Middle Ages, henceforth assumes its twofold destination. It was both an indispensable preparation and a constant encouragement for the principal adoration—that of Humanity. The heart and the intellect now concur in feeling that such preparation can only become fully efficacious through a worthy individual type, for without this the worshipper cannot be preserved from wandering, when affectionately venerating the loving sex. Such a personal invocation is especially decisive when it directly concerns a true female companion. Her holy pre-eminence, far from weakening our other feminine attachments, disposes us still more deeply to adore a tender mother and excellent daughter or sister.

The constant practice of such private adoration which becomes more and more bound up with my public construction of the true religion, has lately enabled me to indicate explicitly its special character by appreciating, in a positive sense, the imperfect germ offered in Catholicism. By its touching institution of the Guardian Angel, mediæval worship supplies me with a happy prognostication of this valuable personal mediation, originally presented under the spontaneous type of Household Gods. But my sociological construction necessarily surpasses its twofold theological antecedents, seeing that the holy mediator is rendered more special and more homogeneous. This intermediary adoration is offered through a being that more nearly resembles the chief divinity, since Humanity can only be personified by a woman. At the same time the preparatory worship is fully adapted to the needs of each individual worshipper for whom

* See the Fifth Saint Clotilde.

it is exclusively destined. The mediæval Guardian Angel differed in nature too much from us, nor was the protection sufficiently personal. Instead of a transitory involuntary patronage, common to many, each Positivist obtains a special patron. Nevertheless, the individual character of this patronage does not prevent the intermediary patrons from continuing to assist the collective adoration of the final object of worshipping Humanity.

In accord with this holy theory the sweet name which the preceding religion consecrated may be utilised by the new worship for designating the personal type of each person's sacred preparation. In this way then, my Clotilde, hast thou ever become systematically my true *Guardian Angel*, as heretofore spontaneously. Amidst the ruins of Catholicism, the West has with a happy instinct preserved this sweet designation as indicating the familiar consciousness of genuine perfection. Adapted henceforth to the final worship, it thus again acquires a holy destiny more complete and durable than the former one, since it is applied to real intermediators who constantly raise us toward the supreme object of adoration. My daily prayer now repeats to thee, as for the last four years: '*My ANGELIC remembrance of thee will always preside over my inexhaustible improvement, purifying my feelings, enlarging my thoughts, and ennobling my conduct.*'

This result inspired me with a deeper sentiment of the special value of an exceptional purity, for if this holy office belongs to thy sex alone, its full efficacy requires scrupulous chastity from mine.

Thy merited incorporation* with the Supreme Being, already to some extent publicly sanctioned, will make thy patronage more beneficial to me. Thy active ministry will more and more become the dominant influence which Humanity should exert in order to fit me for my sublime construction. Without thy secret help I could not adequately construct the true and final logic in which emotions and images will systematically strengthen our feeble reason. Before thy admirable influence was felt by me, I was already aware of the popular character of a philosophy, which at first sight seemed to concern only theorists. But to thy influence alone do I owe the conviction that it is eminently fitted for thy sex. The worship of women, and feminine logic, henceforth become the characteristics of demonstrated religion.

* Fifth Saint Clotilde.

Indeed, without thy irresistible intervention my best efforts, moral and intellectual, would not have sufficed to realise these two features, which should so largely contribute to the near advent of true spirituality.

After this new appreciation of thee, which worthily and definitively systematises thy holy worship, I renew the delightful outpouring which, by a happy custom, henceforward becomes periodical. This brief review of my existence is well suited for the chief commemoration of her who has ensured the exceptional unity of my life, both private and public.

Last year I announced to thee that our commemoration would soon be practically followed by a second phase of the new worship, the Positivist Presentation of the offspring of the excellent proletarian couple who, in the preceding year, inaugurated the true religious marriage.* But I have not yet been able to effect this step because an essential condition was wanting. The artificial paternity was nobly accepted by my eminent colleague,† but the maternal complement had not been found. So I was obliged to postpone this important step rather than sanction a representative not suitable, and badly prepared. This priest-like and wise delay will soon be recompensed by a full realisation in accordance with all needful conditions. The eminent godfather will soon have a noble colleague who, before that, will herself have offered a second and solemn example of the Positivist marriage. Although the simple spontaneity of the first marriage can never be reproduced, its attractive power will be compensated in the second marriage by a better appreciation of the holy engagements that characterise the final monogamy. The social position of this new couple will even mark the gradual elevation of the true religion. My well-deserved invocation of thee is now sufficiently prepared to be openly announced. This announcement will be the more suitable because the solemnity will offer me a precious opportunity for nobly declaring the new step now made for the Positivist Worship by the definitive theory of Guardian Angels.

This lady, soon to become the wife of my chief disciple in biology,‡ already compensates for the disappointment of my hopes of a young lady artist who, as I announced to thee last year,§ would probably prove insufficient. Although she still professes

* See p. 364

† M. Liutr

‡ M. Segond.

§ See p. 365, also p. 393.

the new faith, her adhesion, more intellectual than hearty, does not seem really firm. The unexpected test, referring to thee, which I imposed upon her,* has been only too well justified by all her conduct. My frank estimate of my portrait,† a failure, notwithstanding my sittings for it, seems to have greatly wounded her vanity as an artist. Her aristocratic tendencies also have secretly repelled my judicious advice to bring up her sons as working men, for they unhappily will add to the daily victims of our class prejudices. These two differences together with the lukewarm reception her various pretensions met among us may alienate her from Positivism. But in that case the new Church should rather feel glad at the loss of a member in whom the heart prevails only in appearance. Other feminine adhesions of unquestionable sincerity give a sufficient promise of intimate co-operation by the sex for whom Positivism seems to be specially destined. One of these particularly has recently shown her disposition during my cordial visits to the unmerited prison, where I so fully appreciated her sincere devotedness to a noble husband,‡ who has become my friend.

Soon after our last conversation a happy correspondence§ has at last allowed me to hope for a true successor in the most eminent of my young disciples,|| honoured by my personal confidence, and to whom I owed the spontaneous prophecy of our holy common grave. Although deficient in energy, he unites all the other essential conditions to such a degree that I reckon on nominating him when the surroundings shall have become less hostile. His intellect and heart will then also prompt him to cultivate the only qualifications he needs. Positivism already offers to me other successors, though as yet not selected. But I delight in this anticipation of a worthy continuity before the time when my age shall counsel me to quit or slacken my great mission.

While this sweet conviction gained strength, my incomparable colleague¶ effected for ever the social installation of the true doctrine. His surviving tendencies of a critical nature made me fear he might postpone the adoption of the directly religious character which I had recently imparted to Positivism. But all

* Reading *Lucie*, the work of Clotilde

† The work of this Madame Guichard.

‡ M. Barbès.

§ See *Correspondence inédite* d' A. Comte, Série 2.

|| M. Laffitte. See p. 390.

¶ M. Littré.

my disquieting fears as to his decisive approbation were soon dissipated by a complete and spontaneous adhesion to this definitive step, an adhesion equally honourable to his loyalty and to its opportuneness. Such a confirmation has reacted powerfully on my own faith, and I congratulate myself more and more on having thus at last overcome his surviving revolutionary prejudices. Although the ill-will of metaphysicians has deprived his long manifesto of the distinction it deserved, nevertheless its unavoidable results show themselves already by the increasing tendency of Positivism to be openly recognised in our republican situation, which is irreconcilable with any other doctrine. Even before reaching this elevation its illustrious author* presented a decided example of the true and final fraternity, when he brought working men and philosophers together round his modest table in the country.

These my various satisfactions of a public character were at first disturbed by the private crisis which I announced to thee† as to the precious home which thou hadst consecrated.‡ My financial embarrassments had then become so serious that I feared a speedy coming of the sad fatality, which, under thy holy influence, I prepared to accept with resignation. My loyal and firm conduct happily decided the worthy landlord to take a better course.§ Reassured by partial payments, which gave decided proof of my integrity, he seems to have finally accepted my reasonable request, so I no longer dread being deprived of the holy home where, under thy admirable inspiration, arose both the final religion and my own regeneration. Had I to undergo such a loss, it would proceed from my own decision, a free judgment prompted by more straightened means ; this however has become unlikely.

This crisis as to domicile appears to leave me only one unpleasant recollection, as too clearly furnishing proof regarding the sincerity of recent family communications. My wretched sister was then made aware that I might be cruelly expelled from a home I justly prized and might even lose my furniture. When reassured against this twofold danger I abstained from informing her of the final result, yet she never showed me any

* M. Littré.

† Fifth Saint Clotilde. See p. 367, note *

‡ 10 Rue M. le Prince.

§ See Auguste Comte's Letters to M. Basan, *Correspondence Intime*, Tome IV, pp. 25-30.

anxiety on the subject, still less offered me any assistance from the family. Since this involuntary experience I have irrevocably taken the resolution, as announced to thee, to maintain merely conventional relations with them, giving up any personal interview. Moreover, these temporary concessions will entirely depend on the declining life of the weak father for whose sake they are made.

While these public successes and private troubles were thus mingled, I duly continued my great oral exposition. The true religion was then directly reduced to system as to each of its fundamental elements, Doctrine, Regimen, and even Worship. Admirable appreciation especially welcomed my decisive theory of the seven Positivist Sacraments, which closely unite each natural phase of personal or domestic life with the past and eternal evolution of social life. Official incivility* unexpectedly forbade the two last lectures of the course as announced. But these were soon delivered, though to a smaller audience, at two evening sittings† which I was invited to give.

This passing anomaly has in the end proved a lasting gain in the noble attitude of the new Spiritual Power towards the Temporal Power. My endeavours to obtain a just reparation have first induced the decisive intervention of the powerful adherent‡ who, since my philosophic career began, has watched with truly civic interest the development of Positivism. His rare loyalty and indefatigable zeal have at last realised for me a complete success, which I did not expect after the retrograde vacillation§ above mentioned. This valuable result now fully realised, seems to be entirely safe against any fresh attack. It is the more decisive that I did not buy it by any concession, even in form; on the contrary these prolonged negotiations have first led me to threaten the resisting Temporal Power with systematic blame, in the name of the Past and of the Future. Thus I could, without weakness, afterwards express my emphatic thanks for the final decision. Those have been suitably reproduced by a noble Spanish organ.|| Although the silence of a hostile press lessens the publicity of this second Course, its importance, now more fully recognised, make it a decisive gain as regards its sanction by thy sex.

* See Auguste Comte's letters to M. Vieillard. *Correspondence Inédite*, Tome III, pp. 167-179.

† Held at 10 rue M. le Prince.

‡ M. Vieillard. See Auguste Comte's letters as above.

§ See the last paragraph.

|| J. S. Florez, in the *Eco Hispano-Americano* which he edited.

The exceptional hearer* whom I mentioned to thee last year has now acquired special claims on the sympathy of Positivists owing to her sincere and efficacious help towards securing the official sanction.† Although still regarding her adhesion as rather personal than social, I have reason to think she really understands that Positivism can alone properly end the Western revolution. Her intellect may even compensate for the deficiency of her heart, so far as to make her feel the affective characteristics of the new faith. But even her complete adhesion would not weaken the wise resolve which last year I submitted to thee as regards the woman whose conduct makes the name she unfortunately bears only a basis for financial claims, which I have always rightly admitted.

Before co-operating in the Positivist negotiations she sought to obtain from me the permanent discontinuance of my well-merited silence. Although her requests were affected, and her confessions were imperfect, I should have felt myself wanting in compassion, and I might even have feared irresolution in myself, had I altogether repelled these melancholy supplications of an unhappy woman, henceforth unattractive, and already the victim of gloomy isolation. Accordingly I consented to reply to her letters regularly, but I did so after having directly recalled to her memory the irrevocable consecration of my soul to the chaste and eternal companion who is made inseparable from me by the honour I constantly pay to her holy tomb. All subsequent efforts to stretch my condescension beyond the limits of generous compassion have been promptly repelled, and would if necessary determine me to be finally silent. Although these wise restrictions have naturally arisen out of an unalterable situation, they perhaps will not be sufficiently observed during her remaining life of shattered health. In that case I should completely resume my former just attitude, excepting only the last farewell which I promised thee I would grant her. I should know how to preserve at any price the calm which is essential for my urgent mission, and the intimate adoration which improves and counsels me. Still I trust that my exceptional generosity will not create new difficulties for me.

Our last conversation‡ ended by announcing that I would soon resume the great composition which is inaugurated by my

* Madame Comte, See p. 166.

† *i.e.*, of Our Master's course of lectures (1850).

‡ Fifth Saint-Clotilde.

dear Dedication, publicly announced in the fundamental prelude which has been already published. This hope was early realised, after the completion of my arduous oral exposition.* Then I ended, in four months, the first volume of my second chief work,† which, though not so indispensable as the preceding one,‡ will assuredly be my principal construction. A summary but complete systematisation of Natural Philosophy and specially of Biology, contrasts admirably with the synthesis of the introductory Discourse, which is mainly based on love. Thus the same volume, which at the outset systematically ends the disastrous insurrection of the intellect against the heart, in a subsequent part shows the vast and holy impulse given by this new religious discipline to the intellect when it has been regenerated by quiet submission to the heart. This valuable theoretical addition has decided me to publish the first volume immediately, though I

*Auguste Comte's Public Lectures.

†The *Positive Polity*.

‡The *Positive Philosophy*. Auguste Comte's final judgment on the *Positive Philosophy* stated in the following extract from a letter to Dr. Audiffrent, dated 8 St. Paul, 69 (28 May, 1857) :

In reading your letter of Sunday, received yesterday morning, I have been especially touched by the noble appreciation of my saintly eternal colleague, which gives me a foretaste of the final judgment of Posterity regarding her. I have been of late perfectly assured on this subject by recognising that her moral glorification is irrevocably bound up with the intellectual conviction of the immense superiority of my *Politique* over my *Philosophie*. In order better to measure this decisive superiority, I have read during the last few days the best part of the *Philosophie Positive*—namely, the last three chapters containing the general conclusions, which I had never looked at for fifteen years. Besides their moral dryness, which made me read immediately a canto of Ariosto to restore my tone, I profoundly felt their mental inferiority in relation to the true philosophic point of view at which the heart has completely established me. No competent thinker can now fail to see this contrast, nor consequently forget the angelic influence which produced it by an action all whose essential steps can be already appreciated.

I cannot have a better opportunity than the present for communicating to you my final judgment which will be solemnly given in my autobiography, but which is already in circulation during the last six months among my Parisian disciples. It is this, that though I was bound to deliver, and even to write, my *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, I ought not to have published it till the end of my career, and then as a purely historical document, along with my personal volume of 1864. The preparation which it accomplished was really indispensable; but I might and ought to have withheld it from the public. The march of Positivism would certainly have been firmer and more rapid if I had manifested myself directly by my *Positive Polity*, after my moral regeneration, in a manner fully conformable to the fundamental *opuscules* (see Appendix to Vol. IV of the *Positive Polity*), which pointed directly to my social destination, without giving rise to an intermediate intellectual position, which now creates, especially in England, a grave hindrance to our religious installation.

This original mistake has left behind it no lasting compensation but that of marking more distinctly the profound philosophic reaction due to the spontaneous ascendancy of my incomparable patroness; in this sense I have nothing to regret. No one expects me to judge my own career with such severity, yet it is not at all exaggerated. If the so-called intellectual Positivism creates so much embarrassment, it is I myself who must be blamed for the apparent strength which its wretched adherents would never have acquired without the systematic support which they seem to find in my first great work. Hence I have for some years sought to discountenance the reading of it by my new disciples, as it is to it that my old ones owe their chief imperfections.

had, till now, resolved not to separate it from the following. Thus my holy Dedication would also be published sooner, and I need not reproach myself with having followed personal likings, in a matter which only concerns my social office. When the above decision was generally approved, I soon gave effect to it by for ever renouncing all material advantages from the four volumes of my religious construction.* My present distress naturally increases the merit of thus inaugurating the right practice for the priesthood. Accordingly I properly announced it when duly thanking in writing† the contributors to the collective patronage‡ nobly instituted for my advantage. Although this protection is still inadequate, it seems likely that it will soon suffice for my modest requirements. Still I cannot hope that it will ever allow me to effect this publication without pecuniary help. But the noble nature of my new practice will soon procure a worthy publisher for me, if industrial difficulties do not increase over much. Nevertheless, even in this case, an early realisation of the glorification which thou deservest might be obtained by the intervention of a loyal disciple§ whose zeal is supported by an independent fortune.

I had finished this first volume on the very day of our glorious republican anniversary.|| Five weeks later the beginning of my second volume constituted a sacred opening to the month consecrated each year to the memory of our disastrous private catastrophe. The return of this was marked as on the three previous anniversaries by a philosophical advance, truly worthy of thee. Although the unexpected resumption of my weekly lectures at once stopped this great work, I had already laid out the general plan of the statical construction which forms the most difficult and decisive portion of my entire system of Positive Politics. My lectures being now completely established, I hope to finish our sacred week¶ by continuing without interruption this important composition, so as to complete the new volume within the present year. I feel now, as always, our sweet communion brings me a valuable philosophical reaction. I have recently combined systematically the logic of the heart with that of the intellect,

* *The Positive Polity.*

† Auguste Comte's Circular for 1850.

‡ *Subside Sacerdotal.*

§ Monsieur Joseph Lonchampt, who advanced the cost of printing the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

|| Revolution of February, 1848.

¶ 27 May to 2 June. See note p. 385.

having long since experienced the natural efficacy of this combination. Now consecrated as a doctrine, it should henceforth enable me to utilise its normal power, as manifested in the habitual combination of example and precept.

During my final revision of the first volume,* a touching collective homage opened the year for me in a happy way. A cordial solemnity, presided over by my illustrious colleague,† spontaneously testified the sincere affection of the large regenerated family, the formation of which I had decisively determined. After that, our weekly‡ evening meetings offered a powerful attraction in the systematic revision of our characteristic plan for the transition of the West, by the valuable measures which were added in my last course. My valuable self-denial will thus obtain a fresh glory for my principal collaborator.§ May it secure the political advancement that I promised him, of which he would make such noble use, without injuring the purity which is indispensable for my attitude as a philosopher. This scrupulous revision of our essential subordination to existing necessities has been worthily installed by adopting deliberately, the systematic flag I have constructed for the West, which for ever sets aside the disastrous emblem|| of the levellers. The sacred formula¶ of the final religion is there resolved into two characteristic maxims, one political,** the other moral,†† which respectively supply appropriate seals for Positivists of the two sexes. I shall always congratulate myself on having thus at last created social signs which women can directly acknowledge without compromising their true character. Thus does Positivism proclaim its necessary tendency to associate the end of the Western Revolution with the intimate help of thy sex. These truly systematic emblems in which an essentially Western character does not exclude national forms, will especially suit those populations where women have more distinctly preserved their chivalrous influence. Our charming sisters of the South will thus soon be led to bless thy holy name, which I believe will be chiefly welcomed there. The sweet enthusiasm of Spanish women will perhaps secure thee the tardy gratitude of French women.

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

† M. Littré.

‡ The Positivist Society met each Wednesday at 10 rue M. le Prince.

§ M. Littré.

|| Red Flag.

¶ Love the principle and Order the basis; Progress the end.

** Order and Progress.

†† Live for others.

More and more do I hope, as from the first I have hoped, some day to see thy dear image as the customary emblem of Humanity on the banners of the West.

My latest sacerdotal act rightly proclaimed the fundamental subordination of the intellect to the heart, when the sad end of an eminent biologist,* recently led me justly to exercise an unforeseen office. The publication of this funeral discourse† furnishes a valuable occasion for characterising an essential principle of the true religion, by a personal application equally decisive and opportune. The sight of a great theoretical career which substantially failed solely through deficiency of the affections, in spite of intellectual and practical superiority and favourable circumstances, ought to make everyone better appreciate moral influence, and feel more respect for feminine dignity.

These brief annual indications simply concern my actions and my thoughts, for there is no need of any special explanations about my feelings, which supply the chief moving powers of my entire existence. Thy irrevocable incorporation‡ with the true Great Being systematically sanctions the spontaneous concord between this social centre§ and their seat in the individual. It is no longer only a philosophical doctrine, but a true impulse of the heart that now makes thee the holy and habitual intermediary between Humanity and her Pontiff. Already even, I can foresee that soon thou wilt be also invoked for this holy office by other sincere worshippers in proportion as they feel more strongly how much my great religious construction owes to thee. Our private solemnity now suggests a new advance for universal worship, because it gives me good reason to incorporate with the final dogma a precious theological inspiration. Henceforward adoring thee as my *Guardian Angel*, I shall better unite my personal affection with my social emotions.

Since this definitive form has begun to be familiar as part of my daily worship of thee, this has become both more energetic and more holy. In proportion as time strengthens and purifies by clearer insight, thy sacred image offers me in reality that ideal increase of beauty and vitality which Dante imagined for Beatrice on each ascent into the Heavens. Our exceptional bond is at once more complete and purer than that which united

* M. de Blainville.

† See *Positive Polity*, Vol. I, Appendix (1851).

‡ See the Fifth Saint Clotilde.

§ Humanity.

this immortal couple. Its necessary reaction on the fundamental service of Humanity will always be esteemed more direct and more durable. I appreciate more and more its characteristic purity, in proportion as I feel more and more, that it incites in me the highest moral impulses divested of all personal motives. This growth in holiness offers me in part a compensation for the catastrophe which sundered us in a material sense. Even the efforts that are required for moral intercourse, always on my part both active and passive, have now a tendency to develop my affections. Thus, besides the satisfaction of giving and receiving it fosters creations noways capricious, based unalterably on recollections of the great year,* which are clearly fixed by our precious correspondence. My worship, since it has been fully regulated, presents to me each day a special portion based on images of thee, followed by an unvarying succession of the chief passages taken from our letters. All divisions of the year also assume particular aspects concerning thee, in addition to their usual meaning. For example, to-day I feel a definitive and special memory of this holy week, the beginning of which presents a happy connection between the anniversary of my first sacred composition and the Positivist festival of my chief Catholic patron saint.† Its end recalls to me both thy touching thanks for this holy offering and my spontaneous institution of my regular worship of thee. Now it will be connected with the definite recommencement of the great construction‡ interrupted by my new course, and better prepared for by this intimate out-pouring.

Henceforward dispensed from any severe preparation of the introductory science,§ I devote myself exclusively, especially in this second volume,|| to the direct systematisation of human unity. Since the close of the Middle Ages the real knowledge of our own nature made no essential progress until the valuable results due to my chief scientific precursor.* With the help of Sociology, I have rectified and completed his great biological attempt.

* 1845-6.

† This Positivist festival was that of St. Augustine, 7th St. Paul (27th May). The 'touching thanks' refers to Clotilde de Vaux's visit, 2nd June, 1845, to thank Auguste Comte for his letter on Social Commemoration.

‡ The *Positive Polity*

§ The subjects of Natural Philosophy.

|| The *Positive Polity*, Vol. II.

* Gall. *Théorie des Fonctions du Cerveau*.

Thus my subjective theory of the brain and soul* now leads me to construct the final conception of human nature. Accordingly its emotional principle requires that I should habitually and deeply practise moral culture, based on the purest and most powerful feelings. So I am increasingly led to characterise my adoration of thee by the fundamental formula which I had previously consecrated to the universal religion. *Love for principle, Order for basis, and Progress for end.*† The first and last terms of this maxim are also as directly applicable to any worthy private adoration as to true public worship. The supremacy of love can never assert itself so well as in that relation which is most spontaneous and best defined. The progressive aim specially characterises the impulse that directly concerns moral improvement, without proceeding upwards from the lower terms. Although this sacred formula seems less suitable here, as regards its middle term, it really is no less applicable to the holy worship of thee; indeed, the need of connecting, as far as possible, the natural course of our inward emotions with the unchangeable preponderance of the external order allows even of an easier and more decisive verification in the case of the private affections, as these could in no other way acquire a healthful consistency. Especially in adoring thee do I best practise the true human logic, when the involuntary image, recalled by the voluntary sign, reanimates the intimate effusion, which in its turn inversely develops this fundamental connexion.

Then I feel how momentous it is to leave nothing arbitrary when cultivating the heart, in order to prevent any enervating fluctuations. Our annual outpourings, which will never be read by anyone,‡ make me feel more deeply the great charm of true human unity, when both intelligence and activity help feeling. Then I desire that the holy duties of real life could always thus allow me to cultivate those speculative faculties which best suit the affective principle of our entire existence, although external fatalitics forbid our enjoying at all times its sweet ascendancy.

Besides, my daily life prevents the worship having the too exclusive character which might arise if my holy worship were

* Auguste Comte's Theory of the Brain. See *Positive Polity*, Vol. I, and the *Catechism of Positive Religion*. Also see *O ano sem par* of Senhor Mendes.

† Afterwards changed to *Love the Principle and Order the Basis: Progress the End*.

‡ This intention was afterwards abandoned by our Master. See *Twelfth Saint Clotilde*, p. 466.

exclusively concentrated on thee, to the detriment of other attachments also worthy of influencing me. Already thou knowest how much my adoration of thee has revived that of the admirable mother, the source of all my essential faculties, not only affective, but practical and even mental. Her name and her image are inseparable from thee in my daily and weekly prayers, and this compensates, too late, my inability to console her unmerited sorrow.

This adoration of thee with my mother is also irrevocably bound up with the affectionate reverence which I increasingly feel for the incomparable domestic assistant whom thou didst treat as a real sister, and I cherish as a tender daughter. Her entire devotedness has of late suggested to me projects of legal adoption, like that I imagined for thee before I knew with certainty thy true affection. Although my situation will hardly allow of this affectionate wish being realised, I hope at least after my death, to assure the position of our Sophie, especially as regards true Positivists, all of whom appreciate this admirable type of womanhood. If, apart from any civil adoption, I can institute a religious adoption, this eminent working woman well deserves to supply the first example, and that the most characteristic possible, of religious adoption.

Besides the material protection which I owe to her, habitual contact with such a friend preserves my heart from injurious concentration. Thus I am disposed to feel always, and more deeply, the happy and mutual reaction which springs from all true sympathetic impulses. With this deep conviction I regretfully finish my fifth funeral effusion just at the hour when my weekly worship calls me back to thy holy tomb, to repeat with fresh fervour our dear familiar maxim,

Eternal love and respect

9 *St. Paul*, 62

AUGUSTE COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

*Sagrada es yà mi pasion,
La divinizò la muerte !**

LIVE FOR OTHERS

P.S.—While finishing yesterday† my copy of this delightful effusion, I specially felt a happy philosophical reaction of which

* Holy now is my passion.
Death has rendered it divine !

† Friday, 1st June, 1850.

I ought briefly to tell thee. During the prayer which for the last three years I have addressed to thee each night between my two sleeps (as I do each day between my two repasts), this sacred impulse has led me to a valuable resolve, upon which I congratulate myself in view of my lecture to-morrow. Instead of beginning with the philosophy of history and the Fetichistic state, I shall exceptionally devote it to an exposition of my subjective theory of the brain, which is the main discovery not yet published of my latest work. Thus I shall anticipate the real wish of my audience to learn a doctrine of prime importance, the exposition of which will impart greater clearness and consistency to the rest of my course, supplying the want caused by delay in publishing my last volume.* This fresh act of theoretic self-denial will worthily celebrate thy holy *festival*. This should now offer an exceptional character in order to mark more distinctly the special inauguration of *Thy Final Worship*. It will also recall to my mind the noble maxim of thy *Lucie*: *Expression is the real torch of superior intellects!*

Saturday morning, 12 St. Paul

* The *Positive Polity*, Vol. 1

My Seventh Saint Clotilde

THY UNIVERSAL ADORATION

Begun on 10 St. Paul, 63, continued on the next day and completed on Monday 13,[†] to be read at the Holy Tomb on the following Wednesday, with my first *Saint-Clotilde* which has been printed.*

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY]

Paris, 10 *St. Paul*, 63
(Friday, 30 *May*, 1851)

Donna, se'tanto grande e tanto vali,
Che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre
Sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali.
La tua benignità non pur soccorre
A chi dimanda, ma molte fiate
Liberamente al dimandar precorre.
In te misericordia, in te pietate,
In te magnificenza, in te s'aduna
Quantunque in creatura è di bontate !†

NOBLE AND TENDER-HEARTED PATRONESS†

This seventh annual outpouring is still more charming and holy for me than any of the preceding. Since thy eternal new birth§ our incomparable year of objective intimacy gradually becomes simply the basis of a perfect subjective union. This is already four times as long as the former, and it is to the latter I shall soon refer the greater part of my memories, public and private.

* *Letter on Social Commemoration*, p. 303.

† So mighty art thou lady, and so great
That he who grace desireth, and comes not
To thee for aidance, fain would have desire
Fly without wings. Not only him who asks
Thy bounty succours, but doth freely oft
Forerun the asking. Whatso'er may be
Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
Relenting mercy, large munificence
Are all combined in thee.

(*Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII).

‡ See Test. pp. 402, 408. This is the first Confession in which our Master substitutes Patroness (Patronne) for Wife (Epouse).

§ See the Third Saint Clotilde, p. 343.

But my chief images of thee, far from losing intensity by such extension, are made clearer and brighter by the sweet perseverance of my regular worship. This year a passing coincidence* makes these images more lively by a happy correspondence of the same days of the week with the monthly dates of my holy moral regeneration. All that I have worthily accomplished during these six years is thus more effectually connected with its essential source. My reminiscences go back less and less beyond this fundamental era of 1845, when I owed to thee what I can already call, even publicly, my second life. In proportion as I develop this new existence, every one feels that I have truly become a twofold organ for Humanity through thy increasing identification with all my noble achievements. Of this natural growth in our close connection the present year presents a decisive phase wherein I can already guarantee for all sincere Positivists, an early advent of the normal worship which I have so justly vowed to thee. Hitherto every Tuesday recalled to my memory thy interment, being the day adopted for my weekly visit during the year of mourning. Now it will still more mark for me, not only thy annual new birth but the coincidence of thy Catholic Saint's day with the Positivist worship of the best type of the Papacy† in the calendar of the West,‡ of which the earlier germ was due to thee.§ These secondary indications, though intellectually unimportant, become precious for the heart, because they render the images clearer and the emotions more vivid.

After my year of mourning, in our third annual communion, I apprised thee of the growth of thy worship, as indicated by the prediction of the young friend,|| who alone could thus appreciate thy reaction on me, that we ought to possess in common a holy tomb. But this forecast would remain private until my important publication of the following year* had deeply manifested thy salutary influence on me. Putting aside some too doubtful wishes, as to the *Positivist Virgin*, I can only reckon on indications sincerely engendered by a just appreciation of this decisive construction. Now these undeniable tendencies have become sufficiently multiplied to guarantee an early realisation of my dearest hopes.

* In 1851 the weekly and monthly dates corresponded with those in 1845, the year of the intimacy between Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux.

† 3rd June is 14th St. Paul (Hildebrand, Gregory VII).

‡ Historical Calendar constructed by our Master.

§ *Letter on Social Commemoration*, p. 303.

|| M. Pierre Jaffitte.

* *General View of Positivism*, 1848.

This well-merited gratitude felt towards thee naturally began among the young Positivists who, since our last annual conversation, have frequently given me clear proof of it. I will only mention to thee the naive impression of one of them, a new disciple* truly eminent for his admirable combination of feeling and intellect. Though as yet known to me only by his letters, he without any suggestions from me, wrote to me spontaneously in last December : ' The melancholy loss you have sustained will long leave a void among us.' But such proofs have gained an un hoped-for confirmation, from the decisive adhesion of my eminent colleague,† whose age and character indicate the early and universal spread of the tendency which he sanctions. On a characteristic occasion, explained below, he wrote to me this precious prophecy : ' She will be your Egeria, your Beatrice, your Laura. Refer to her and to her memory, the new developments of your doctrines ; consecrate your recollections of her, inscribed at the head of your books ; entwine her name with your own.' His personal connection with thy so-called rival increases the merit and the force of this noble sanction, which is already incorporated with my regular worship of thee.

The solemn publication of my great Dedication will soon extend and consolidate these spontaneous dispositions by directly attracting general attention to thy incomparable, though involuntary, participation in my principal construction.‡ In this way I should find an excellent compensation for the painful though unavoidable delay which the declaration of my just gratitude at first underwent. My preliminary Discourse having for the last three years allowed the public to appreciate thy holy influence, my exceptional gratitude will strike everyone as already sufficiently justified by the greatness of the benefit to me. This happy inversion, which I was obliged to make, placing the holy Dedication after the Work which inspired it, will all the more dispose choice spirits to sanction my eternal adoration, and even to associate themselves worthily with it.

Some theorists, exaggerating the preponderance which I rightly assigned to the affections as the basis of the true religion, had at first been seriously alarmed for intellectual culture. But the second half of the volume I am about to publish will completely banish their irrational fears, proving as it does, by several

* Dr. Audiffrent.

† Littré.

‡ The *Positive Polity*, Religion of Humanity.

decisive improvements, how entirely the encyclopedic regimen perfects and consolidates all great scientific conceptions. It will soon be felt that, by systematising the reaction of the heart on the intellect I have at last created the true human logic, equally fitted to enlarge our meditations and to purify them. Henceforth all sound intellects will unite with all noble souls in blessing thy holy influence, without which I could not have duly constructed this decisive synthesis.

This sincere association with my own gratitude should naturally begin with my sex. But its full efficiency must be obtained from thine. Now, though such a sanction cannot yet sufficiently shine forth, I have already good reason to expect that it will soon manifest itself. The unhappy daughter * of the old friend whom I lost some weeks after thy death, afforded to me the earliest private indication of this, rendered more touching and decisive by her personal reserve, when, alas! she was too near her premature end, so sadly like thy own. Similar testimonies have multiplied among most Positivist ladies since our last communion. These have been shown either negatively by their repulsion for thy unworthy rival, or even by more direct and pure sympathies. Completing my Dedication, the happy republication of thy touching *Lucie* will soon invest these feminine tributes with a more definite character. Thy sex will feel glorified by my personally presenting thee in the most powerful of philosophical constructions. Women alone can adequately feel how much greater is my debt to thee than that of Dante to his Beatrice.

But these tendencies of private life will be especially consolidated and developed by the powerful public impulse gradually emanating from the condition of the West. The proletarian revolution, when more completely characterised, will not be slow to awaken the feminine revolution. This is naturally inseparable from the former, and has been bequeathed to us by the Middle Ages. The enfranchisement of thy sex from work outside home, that is to say, its liberation from poverty and prostitution, constitutes the main condition, though hitherto latent, of a fitting incorporation of the people with modern Society. So soon as their intimate connexion shall have been manifested, women will at last take a decided part in the Western Revolution, which cannot be ended without their due incorporation. Thus, my Clotilde, thy holy name will become truly popular, as personifying for the

Victoire Bonnin.

entire population of the West the best type of woman in the future. Special invocation of thee will lead tender souls towards a regeneration, the chief character of which consists in the true emancipation of thy sex, so well forecast in thy only publication.* Although cultivated women may sincerely honour thee, the main appreciation of thee should arise among the mothers and wives of the working classes. Already we possess the most touching proof of this in the undying worship which our incomparable Sophie has cordially devoted to thee. From this class alone wilt thou receive adoration free from all indirect rivalry and fully marked by tender veneration.

To-day I feel bound to insist on the new character imparted to thy holy worship by the normal concurrence of my personal gratitude with public sympathies, either experienced or foreseen. Having completed this exceptional preface, I will next present the annual statement of events, which I have happily instituted for thee as my chief judge.

That this faithful recital may exactly conform to the order of time, I should first announce my loyal rectification, in last June, of the too severe judgment which I announced to thee in the preceding year on a young adherent.† Having later received her more intimate confidence by way of a Positivist confession, I have happily satisfied myself that my earlier hopes may continue in essentials. Not only has her vanity as an artist tacitly accepted my just condemnation of a portrait‡ which has failed, but she has also overcome her aristocratic habits sufficiently to accept aright my wise advice to destine her young sons for working men. Besides her difficult and exceptional position should supply special excuse for her present deficiencies and a better appreciation of her sincere efforts. I trust that my solemn Dedication will soon urge her to show suitably her own gratitude to thee. At the same time as this rectification, there ceased the exceptional correspondence which, as I already mentioned to thee, was recently conceded by me to the unworthy woman who bears my name. After having lasted for five months, this too generous concession came to a natural end without any fault on my side. Its cessation was the consequence of her useless efforts to go beyond the necessary limits which I had always prescribed as its fundamental condition. The deserved refusal which she soon

* The story of *Lucie*.

† Mme. Guichard.

‡ Of himself.

drew from me in reference to a religious celebration, finally ended a correspondence which my compassion had regretfully allowed, but can never be resumed on any pretext.

In July the second Positivist marriage was performed* with as much dignity as I had given thee reason to hope. Decisive signatures now prove the assistance given by thy sex to my sacerdotal acts. Seeing that thy holy influence had thus become sufficiently appreciated, I ventured on this occasion to invoke it openly. Everyone felt its close connexion with a ceremony which without thee I never could have performed. Sympathy of this kind is the more precious to me in that my eminent colleague† sincerely shared it, notwithstanding his unfavourable relations.‡ My heart was then profoundly touched in another way for I was able, in the same address, to announce the moral adoption§ of which I had just informed thee, as regards our Sophie, whose touching presence rendered this solemnisation more decisive. Besides these characteristic applications, the new religion naturally elicited, through this precious ceremony, a more complete and impressive exposition of my recent theory of our nine social Sacraments, which, till then, had been almost unknown to my chief colleague.¶ The positivist principle of Eternal Widowhood was thus decisively confirmed in its full and public acceptance by a couple who had maturely considered it. Thus a practice which at first nobly sprang from popular initiative has been sanctioned by wise and systematic reflection that leaves no room to doubt its general adoption in the end. One regret only abated my deep satisfaction in this step. Reasonable prudence debarred me from publishing my characteristic address, in which the indispensable mention of names might have compromised the official position of a worthy father. But this reserve, too evidently justified by a retrograde law, gave greater importance to the noble participation of the head of the family, who was not afraid to join his signature with that of the mother and young sister of the bride. While submitting as was right to this necessity, I also felt the sweetness of giving up my own deep satisfaction, public and private, to secure the peace of another. I trust these exceptional difficulties will not increase so as to affect prejudicially the

* 18 July 1850. Dr. Segond.

† M. Littré.

‡ His friendly relations with Madame Comte.

§ Adoption by Auguste Comte of his domestic, Madame Thomas (Sophie), as his daughter.

¶ M. Littré.

religious affiliation of the son, lately born to the young couple. But, having thus manifested my wise tolerance and just reserve, I felt it right to announce that, as a priest, I must henceforward refuse any concessions which in future cases could, even only by my silence, impair the purity and the dignity of Positivist worship.

In the following month an important visit led me to explain this noble progress to the worthy head of our chief Scottish group.* This first interview also allowed him to appreciate my philosophical liberty, for he took part in one of my weekly meetings.† During this very month the dissensions which I mentioned to thee regarding my unfortunate sister became so serious as to free me from a fallacious fraternity ; henceforward this will be confined to merely rare and cold inquiries about our respective healths. The fatal circumstances of my private life have at least become clear, on every side, since our last conversation. Our complete fusion, and the pure devotedness of my excellent Sophie, at last constitute my real moral treasures, the inexhaustible efficacy of which I am now able to develop.

In September my public exposition of the Religion of Humanity led me to improve the fundamental worship, especially as regards the decisive institution of Guardian Angels. Thou art aware how my own case was marked by an increase in the number of these, when I added each day to my worship of thee as supreme that of my holy mother and my excellent adopted daughter. Thus the spontaneous example has been systematised by me, for I sanctioned it morally in a threefold way. This representing Past, Present, and Future, unites veneration for superiors, and attachment of equals, with benevolence towards inferiors. The institution having been thus completed I ventured to enter on the delightful problem which I had reserved for thee, as to the modification of the Guardian Angels in the case of women. This indispensable modification, though confused while the type remained simple, easily resulted from the difference of sex. I properly combine similarity with variety by consecrating for both sexes the preponderance of the maternal Angel, while leaving each sex to select from the other the two supplementary Angels.

In the following month‡ the undisturbed termination of my second religious course of lectures allowed me to give up

* Alexander Bain.

† *i.e.*, of the Positivist Society.

‡ October.

with dignity the false position which appeared to represent Positivists as political allies of the metaphysicians who have always been our chief philosophical adversaries. Henceforward, we have disowned the parties of anarchy in its various forms and of mere retrogression. This solemn conclusion of my course also prompted the renewed utterance of my just gratitude to thee. This new experience (well received as was, three years previously, my first touching manifestation*) proves that honourable souls sanction the free utterance of my heart, though it should be used with wise reserve. During the same month I was obliged finally to retract the premature hopes which I had expressed to thee† that a young friend‡ might deserve to become my successor. His insufficient energy of which I informed thee is in reality so pronounced that it must deprive him of this prospect, notwithstanding the eminent combination of his heart with his intellect. I fear that this one deficiency may always keep him among ordinary apostles, although he loyally recognises his want of energy and perhaps of perseverance. My true successor unfortunately is still to arise among the distinguished body of young men that begins to surround me.

In November, the characteristic ending of my second course led me to commence each week§ among our great family, a long discussion on the final attitude of the Positivist party that is now about to supersede all earlier parties. In spite of the revolutionary routine I have at last been able to recall all true brethren into the normal path. In this I would if necessary have walked alone, for it is the only path worthy of our holy doctrine. The same month ended with the touching solemnity I had announced to thee, which afforded me the first application of my pontifical seal.|| The two first Positivist couples worthily combined to

* See the Fourth Saint Clotilde (1848).

† See p. 377.

‡ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, p. 470. 'Till such time as Positivism finds complete organs, I am compelled to adjourn the accomplishment of a duty, which I have stated to be incumbent on all leaders, when they have reached my age. The sacred law of continuity enjoins the founder of the true religion, more than any preceding Pontiff, to name in time his successor, so that by the due influence of opinion his choice may be corrected or the acceptance of that successor be facilitated. But the preceding remarks dispense with my explaining why it is that I must still adjourn this duty, though it has twice inspired me with premature hopes. Not as yet able to find a successor, nor even a colleague, I declared that if I died without finding one the growth of Positivism would be sounder if it relied on the free exertions of my true disciples than under an incompetent chief. But it is permitted me to hope that the completion of my religious construction will soon bring forward some one who may be acceptable, or at any rate, that it will make impossible the acceptance of any *l'inter-aleur*.' See also our Master's Letters to M. Lafitte in *Correspondence inédite*.

§ This refers to the weekly meeting of the Société Positiviste on each Wednesday evening during the year.

|| See Description (p. 486) of the Sacred Seals.

obtain for the first-born in Positivism our initial Sacrament,* which was accompanied by much sympathy from both sexes and all ages. One hundred years after the *Encyclopedia* was commenced, a child, freely devoted to complete regeneration, thus inaugurated the true and final regime. This child at its birth was thus affiliated to Positivism without any concessions to Theology or even to Metaphysics.

During the last month† of this year, during which Positivism has grown so much, I elaborated the great work dedicated by me to thee. In spite of the exceptional difficulties of publishing this sacred volume,‡ I resumed the composition of my second volume, the continuation of which I had announced to thee prematurely, for this was impossible while my second course of lectures required constant care. After its completion I recommenced my great construction under the happy impulse derived from the recent solemnity.§ Thus I was soon enabled to write the principal chapter of my religious treatise, which directly establishes the general theory of religion.|| In this decisive construction I should particularly point out to thee my final systematisation of the Guardian Angels. Its basis is the true religious definition of Woman regarded as the natural mediatrix between man and Humanity who confides to her above all her moral providence.

The opening of the New Year¶ marked the growth of Positivism, for me, by the still more solemn visit of our great family.** This for the past three years has been led by my eminent colleague.†† My recent work has allowed me to receive these precious offerings of respect as becomes the acknowledged founder of the true religion. One addition only is wanting for this noble yearly reward of a devoted life—to see thy holy name worthily joined with my own. But the manifest justice which my decisive volume must ensure for thee will, I hope, finally procure this satisfaction for me.

In February the social progress of Positivism was confirmed by a new symptom—the more earnest and complete adhesion which it has inspired in the excellent official patron‡‡ of my weekly courses. For twenty-five years he, with truly civic zeal, has assiduously followed my philosophical development, which he feels supplies the only solution of Western anarchy. During this,

* Presentation.

† December, 1850.

‡ *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

§ The Presentation referred to above.

†† M. Vicillard.

|| *Positive Polity*, Vol. II, Ch. I.

¶ 1851.

** Of Positivists.

†† M. Littré.

our third annual conversation, he directly encouraged me openly to claim the systematic guidance of our republican situation, in the name both of Order and Progress. I hope that the approaching termination of his official position will allow him freely to express his Positivist convictions, which have already served us so much, though only indirectly. This important interview was followed by my generous resolution to institute a weekly reading of the fundamental chapter,* which I had just finished. During six weeks this unpublished communication has deeply edified all our co-religionists as to the systematic perfecting of my religious construction. Its complete opportuneness has been clearly shown to those least well-disposed towards it. I have particularly been touched by the scrupulous attention given all through my reading by the eminent colleague,† who is best capable of understanding, and even of utilising well, this decisive foundation, truly confirmed by such sympathy.

The following‡ month particularly increased our precious acquirements. I nobly opened it by publishing separately the Cerebral Table. My oral exposition of this table, which was suggested to me last year by my holy effusion,§ followed upon the reading of my Great Dedication. My solemn renunciation of literary profits was at the same time completed by a similar act of self-denial which authorised the separate sale of each volume of my religious treatise.

Soon after this a happy device enabled me to recognise and proclaim the mental and moral value of an eminent Genoese,|| whose merit as a Positivist was till then concealed by his modest correspondence in too great conformity with a false position. In the midst of this memorable month (March) my painful recollections (renewed each year) of thy long decline have been unexpectedly soothed by the unhopèd for success of my latest sacrifices.¶ Inspired by these, a young Positivist** has nobly offered his moderate landed property as a guarantee for the expenses of printing the volume,†† which has remained in manuscript for an entire year. This generous impulse at once removed these sad obstacles.

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. II, Ch. I, Theory of Religion, read at the *Société Positiviste* in MS.

† M. Littré.

‡ March.

§ The Sixth Saint Clotilde, 1850.

|| Signor Profumo. See *Correspondence Inédite*, Série III.

¶ The renunciation of profits, etc., above mentioned.

** M. Joseph Lonchamps.

†† *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

Accordingly the sacred volume has been definitely promised for publication at the end of the next three months. The persevering enterprise of my excellent printer* leaves no room to doubt the fulfilment of his undertaking. Before the end of March I enjoyed the happiness of reading in print the great preface, which I had just written in justification of my dear Dedication. At the same time I duly announced this decisive result in my second Annual Circular† to the devoted contributors to a subscription‡ which, though still inadequate, will soon adequately guarantee my material existence.

The fifth return of my fatal anniversary§ was signalled by two happy incidents. On that sad day, at the very hour of the catastrophe, I was reading the proof of the incomparable Dedication for the publication of which I had waited so long. On the following day the solemn opening of my third religious course, besides confirming the political attitude of true Positivists, allowed of my duly offering to thee, in public, a renewed testimony. This was completely approved by an audience which was considerably increased. This unlooked-for increase, afterwards well maintained, must widen the publicity of those holy utterances, the just expression of which I ought no longer to hold back. One dissent only, which secretly emanated from thy unworthy rival, in the end led me, though greatly moved, to explain the whole of our domestic fatality, at two exceptional meetings of the Positivist Society, held on the 16th and 23rd of April. But this indispensable statement, which I congratulate myself to have in no way provoked, soon acquired great importance by its happy reaction on my eminent colleague who was then naturally absent. His admirable letter|| from which I have, as above, cited his special estimate of thee, only asked of me for the guilty person a magnanimous silence. This I would willingly have adopted, even supposing my holy adoration of thee did not banish all personal bitterness. Being thus obliged to reproduce in writing my oral explanations, I wrote a characteristic reply, which may be published later, thus saving me any further reference to my painful past life. This irreproachable result will increase our intimacy, showing in her

* M. Thunot.

† The Annual Circulars of Auguste Comte, 1850-1857.

‡ This was first instituted by M. Littré in 1849 to maintain our Master; it was afterwards converted by him into the *Sacerdotal Subsidy*.

§ 5 April.

|| See p. 508. Letter of M. Littré to Auguste Comte.

true light the unhappy woman towards whom I had practised a too generous reserve in order to preserve his support for her. Moreover, this crisis has decided my final attitude towards the pretended wife to whom I felt obliged to return unopened a letter, which cannot be followed by any other. This natural punishment of her guilty proceedings also frees me from her insincere presence at my weekly lectures, for she will be henceforward excluded by my definite invocation of thee.

The month of May has fully assured me that Positivism has decisively extended to the Anglo-Americans. There, true statesmen, whose situation affords them greater foresight than those of the mother-country, see no other systematic protection against audacious levellers, who cannot now be restrained by any kind of material force.

The new religion which is invoked in the United States of America for Order more eagerly than it is here for Progress, will there soon spread thy worship. My sacred volume,* impatiently expected in this new region, will lead women, who feel more deeply the moral ravages of industrial and scientific materialism, specially to bless thee. This same month one of our young brethren† has worthily shown his exceptional merit by the admirable resolution‡ which will make him, though in an out-of-the-way place, an eminent type of the practical Positivist. While seriously congratulating him, I particularly urged his completion of this act of wise devotedness by a noble marriage with some estimable peasant, even though she were poor and illiterate. His modest reply, made provisionally speaks of a general confession to be made by himself. This already gives me hope that he comprehends the importance of my advice. Thus I obtain the best social fruit of my long self-denial, through spontaneous recognition of me by souls of this stamp, as their spiritual leader. These sweet satisfactions have been much increased since my utterance of last year to thee. The South and the North have recently witnessed the growth of distinguished young Positivists well disposed to understand and propagate thy worship. All of them are also worthy to co-operate in the important periodical§ in which thou shouldst have had an important share. This only is needed for organising our intellectual and social influence on the West.

* *The Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

† M. Hadéry.

‡ To take to farming.

§ *La Revue Occidentale*, a project which our Master afterwards rejected.

This simple yearly exposition of my theoretical progress since our last solemnity* never requires to be completed by a separate statement of the feelings which have inspired my thoughts and guided my conduct. These sentiments are too well known to thee to require any special explanation; I need only give thee a general assurance that they are more and more bound up with thee.

The last but one of my annual acts of homage to thee directly celebrated thy irrevocable incorporation with the true Great Being. All my subsequent steps, especially as to the intimate connections thou hast effected between my private life and my public life, have more and more made thee the habitual centre of my entire existence. If Beatrice became for Dante the personification of Wisdom, thou shouldst still better represent for me the Supreme Being of whom thou art worthy to be a part. The general principle of representing woman as the normal symbol of Humanity is already admitted openly to be essential for systematising Positive Worship. My approaching publication will fully justify for all noble souls the special application I must make of this principle as regards thee. Thou, openly become my Moral Providence, wilt soon be adored by all who feel the benefit of this holy inspiration. In my exceptional reply† to my eminent colleague I ventured to suggest such a reaction on himself, as natural for one who best knows how to profit by the growth of Positivism as Religion. His admirable loyalty‡ assures me that in spite of his unfavourable circumstances, he will nobly realise this duty, as soon as he shall have recognised it. Not only is thy name, already and for ever, bound up with mine, but, through thy well-merited worship, my objective life will soon, and even publicly, obtain the just reward of my prolonged services, and become the surest guarantee for my final glorification. If thy brother's§ ingratitude did not deprive me of thy holy portrait, this might, perhaps, supply the type of Humanity on our banner of the West. I even hope that this unjustifiable obstacle will not prevent thy image from appearing on the emblems of Positivism.

* Sixth Saint Clotilde.

† Auguste Comte's letter to Littré. See p. 511.

‡ After our Master's death, M. Littré (1863) published his *Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive*, which was intended to discredit Auguste Comte's 'Second Life' and the Religion of Humanity.

§ Monsieur Maximilien Marie.

The not distant development of Sociolatriy,* personal and public, will naturally lead to a holy grouping together of all women who are worthy objects of public adoration. Then thy subjective life will be specially associated with that of Beatrice, owing to the real analogy between them, both in respect of functions performed and glory earned, and alas, in the too great similarity of objective fates. My daily and increasing admiration for the greatest of poets† would thus be merely a private presentiment of the public consecration equally merited by our respective angels. The incomparable composition‡ which, in fact, ended the theological state, will finally be assimilated to that§ which initiated the Positive state, as soon as the five centuries|| of the Modern Revolution, separating these two epochs, shall have been properly estimated. But this intellectual comparison should, in our time, be forestalled by the moral union of the two angels destined to preside over the two chief constructions of the Modern Transition.¶ The sweet companionship of the two angels has already become so familiar to me that I have completely incorporated with my worship of thee the beautiful hymn that my incomparable precursor addressed at the end of his sublime epic to the sweet Goddess of the West. Perhaps his heart—even more emancipated than his intellect—ventured to apply it secretly to his Beatrice. If one of my most eminent disciples succeeds as I hope, in adapting adequate music to this sacred song of praise, it will soon become a happy ornament of Positive Worship, both private and public, as being alike appropriate for Woman and for Humanity.

While finishing my Seventh Saint Clotilde, on the very date that I sent thee my first,** I feel more deeply the profound transformation which my worship of thee has undergone during the six years that I have constantly practised it. Henceforward thou shalt no longer be only my eternal companion. The near reaction of public appreciation will make me above all adore thee as my chief Patroness. Though attachment can never lessen, veneration will more and more prevail. My chaste tenderness will

* Social Worship.

† Dante.

‡ The Divine Comedy.

§ The *Positive Polity*.

|| The 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries.

¶ Auguste Comte's Historical Philosophy demonstrated that the Middle Ages—Catholicism and Feudalism—essentially ended with the termination of the 13th Century. The Modern Transition began with the 14th Century.

** 2nd June, in 1845.

more resemble that of a pagan who felt he was beloved by a goddess. For my worship will specially honour in thee the attributes to which my Religion assigns the first place. Too much hindered by the objective life, their holy pre-eminence is irresistibly developed in the subjective existence. To me chiefly it belongs to feel and to adore this ascendancy, because the principal normal office of the Positive priesthood is to discern and declare real merit, amid all the obstacles created by fortune, situation, and even education. I should not be a true pontiff of Humanity were I not deeply convinced of my moral inferiority to thee. Thus I should try to be more and more at one with thee so as to resemble thee. Never ceasing to be my true wife, thou shalt become above all my holy Patroness, and the increasing source of my highest amelioration, in proportion as I shall better combine the two elements of the happy motto which I induced thee to accept,

Eternal love and respect

Sagrada es y à mi pasión,

LIVE FOR OTHERS

*La divinizè la muerte.**

AUGUSTE COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

Monday, 13 St. Paul, 63

P.S.—While finishing my Sixth Saint Clotilde, there grew within me a noble philosophic resolve of which I was bound at once to add a short indication. Now, I must likewise announce to thee a happy religious inspiration which arose while I read this effusion to thee last Wednesday on the altar of mourning.†

Some hours previously I had learned through a touching letter the irreparable loss of an only daughter, carried off at the beginning of her eighteenth year (born in May, 1834), suffered by one of my most excellent co-religionists, older than myself. This true Positivist had immediately resolved to perpetuate subjectively this dear life, henceforward exalting paternal affection to the constant adoration of this sweet Guardian Angel. Though this letter was not addressed to me, I felt bound, as the head of Positivism, to express directly my approval of this decisive application of our personal worship, and even solemnly to join in this adoration, in the name of the Great Being whose systematic organ I am. While sweetly commemorating, as usual, on thy holy tomb, the souls worthy of being grouped

* Holy now is my passion,
Death has rendered it divine!

† The tomb of Clotilde de Vaux in the Eastern Cemetery of Paris, commonly known as Père Lachaise.

round thee, I there and then placed Louise Pénard among thy sacred companions, who have been prematurely torn from Humanity. More completely than the unfortunate Victoire Bonnin, she was secretly devoted by her noble father to the true religion, which would soon have inclined her to adore thee, and perhaps worthily to continue thy great social mission. Before thy altar of mourning, I determined of my own accord to exercise in this decisive case, the eminent function of a consoler, so happily fitted for my priestly office. This precious interlude worthily performed next day, must on Saturday have reached the unhappy father, who was thus invited to exalt this cherished Angel into a holy personification of the Great Being, whose inadequate struggles against her severe destiny that Angel will specially represent. The tender married couple will of themselves feel how much thou hast helped me to provide this un hoped-for consolation.

While paying thee the honour due for this fresh inspiration, I was bound to apprise thee of an unexpected case which fully indicates the religious character of rising Positivism. By it I have learnt that henceforward I can console as well as honour. Thus my holy mission has been tested under all its characteristic aspects. Nothing is wanting to it except a vaster field, public and private.

Tuesday, 21 *St. Paul*, 63

Having again read my Seventh Saint Clotilde, in its definitive shape, I feel, before going on my sacred visit,* the need of expressing here my deep satisfaction with the admirable reply by which the excellent father has just testified his cordial gratitude. Thus sweetly impelled, I shall again consecrate to thee the amiable Louise Pénard, whom two years hence her father's care would have offered to my pontifical benediction, from which thine is inseparable. Henceforward the holy victim will be joined with my poor Victoire Bonnin and thy noble Elisa Mercœur : they will worthily be the first of the maidens in the escort of the two immortal sisters soon to be adored by the regenerate West, Beatrice Portinari and Clotilde de Vaux.

Wednesday morning, 22 *St. Paul*, 63

* To the tomb of Clotilde de Vaux.

My Eighth Saint Clotilde

THY INCOMPARABLE PATRONAGE

*Quella che 'mparadisa la mia mente**
Ogni basso pensier dal cor m'avulse.†

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY.]

Begun on 9 St. Paul, 64 ; continued the second day after, and finished on Monday 12 ;
to be read at the Holy Tomb on the following Wednesday

Paris, 9 St. Paul, 64
(Friday. 28 May, 1852)

NOBLE AND TENDER PATRONESS

According as I develop my holy worship of thee, each annual effusion is more closely connected with the preceding, because we draw nearer to the sacred identity between us, which posterity will make familiar to all. When finishing our last conversation, I foresaw the character and even the title of this one, the beginning of which already indicates the nature of the next. This increasing connexion specially results from the final transformation which will always distinguish my Seventh St. Clotilde.‡

Thy subjective ascendancy, obtaining a decisive publicity, could but immediately tend towards the normal condition suitable to our respective destinies. Never ceasing to be my holy companion, thou hast become, above all, my august Patroness, thus offering the best possible type for our sacred institution of true Guardian Angels, the source and model of which were due to my constant worship of thee. Indeed no other feminine providence could be so complete as thine, since our exceptional fate produced in thee an intimate fusion of the three general types of angelic

* She who doth imparadise my soul.—Dante *Paradiso*, Canto XXVIII.)

† Every unworthy thought tore from my mind.—(Petrarch).

‡ This refers to our Master's address to Clotilde de Vaux, which henceforward, from Wife, became Patroness.

patronage. Already my companion and my daughter, thenceforward thou also hast become the real mother of my second life, through which I shall mainly be appreciated.

The preponderance of this attribution leads my adoration of thee to the normal state of inward worship, over which the maternal angel should preside, so that veneration may dominate attachment. I feel more and more that this second mother will never permit me to neglect the first, whose only true daughter thou wilt always be. To the worship of thee, I owed my resumption of her worship, and the holy assistance of you both will always increase by unceasingly making me better. The subjective life, now so imperfectly understood, spontaneously develops these sacred bonds, which at first sight seem to contradict each other.

But this second objective existence, which I specially devote to the Great Being, becomes for myself a precious privilege owing to the anarchy which deprives nearly all my contemporaries of it. For in the normal state, each person, about the age of full maturity, should gain a new life, this being the natural result of a complete preparation in heart, intellect, and character. Such a transformation, of frequent occurrence among our pious and chivalrous ancestors, has become, in our days, exceptional only owing to the too common failure of private and public initiation, in an epoch of mental and moral disorder. Although I made a better use of my first life, my second life would not have acquired its present completeness had I not worthily undergone thy incomparable ascendancy.

Thy final patronage, having become sufficiently familiar, disposes me to recall the memory of our brief objective past, in order to realise in my imagination how we should have lived had not the fatal catastrophe occurred. Accordingly I feel that our objective union would, in the main, have differed but little from the subjective bond, which alone has been able to develop itself between us.

In fact, thou rememberest that my adoration, becoming more and more pure through thy salutary restraint, I at last formed the project of legal adoption, which would soon have permitted thee openly to take my name, or at least to inhabit my house. Whenever, after my philosophical retirement, I shall publish our holy correspondence, this touching mystery will be completely revealed to superior souls in the latest of my

letters.* It is true that, when proposing to thee a union of this kind, I was still unaware to what an extent thy tender affection for me really conformed to mine for thee. At that time thou hadst only avowed it to our Sophie, and even she did not declare to me thy tenderness, until after thy own confidence, which was only given to me in the fatal week.† But I now venture to say with conviction that this invaluable conformity of feeling would in no way have changed my definite resolve to cherish thee simply as my daughter.

Only a union of this sort was suitable for our exceptional fatalities. Although our respective situations might have morally afforded us entire liberty, our increasing purity would have wisely continued, though no longer prescribed by motives of delicacy. To render our sacrifice no longer painful, it would have sufficed, in our sad situations, to imagine the consequences of the birth of a being without a name. Thy nature and my experience would alike have led us to renounce for ever sensual gratifications, so soon as each of us had acquired the certainty of possessing the affections which such satisfactions are, above all, destined to establish and confirm.

The warmth of my own nature has not prevented me from instituting the chaste marriage, designed worthily to regulate human births, as I shall explain further on.‡ I feel now that it would have allowed of my making a personal application of this institution, owing to the serious motives which made it a duty for us. In that direction tended, at bottom, my spontaneous project of thy legal adoption as my daughter. Owing to the natural resemblance of all sympathetic affections, our everlasting renunciation of any sensual tie abolished the only distinction between wife and daughter, due to the difference of our ages. The usual bitterness of such constraint entirely disappeared in the mutual conviction that it arose from duty imposed by our situation, and not from any want of affection. Thus the definitive preponderance of veneration makes me now feel more deeply what would have been the habitual character of our objective union, had we enjoyed its continuance. The same disposition which makes me henceforward adore thee subjectively as mother, would then have made

* See letter dated 18th March, 1846, from Auguste Comte to Clotilde de Vaux. P. 294.

† The week of Clotilde de Vaux's last illness, Monday, 30th March, to Sunday, 5th April, 1846, the day of her death.

‡ See p. 411.

me cherish thee objectively as daughter, for complete chastity in married life is equally compatible with either of these two attitudes.

I foresaw this final appreciation of our holy intimacy when, some weeks after the catastrophe I worthily announced the loss of an adopted daughter. Thy artless confidence to Sophie on our triple happiness showed a similar tendency. The attachment of both of you to me has in fact become essentially similar ; just as each case is akin to the affection which binds me to my holy mother. Corporeal relations being renounced, no differences remain but such as naturally result from diversity in education and social position. So thou wouldst have been legally, as already thou wert morally, the true sister of her whom all my friends now treat as my daughter by adoption.

How sweet it is for me to feel this holy uniformity which at last characterises my chief private affections ! It consolidates and develops the unity of my entire being by more fully connecting my intimate sympathies with my public sentiments. In this way my objective life comes nearer to the subjective life which grateful posterity reserves for me. In spite of my isolation as a philosopher, I had the happiness to obtain the affection, essentially similar, of three admirable women. The just tribute of a select public will soon ratify this spontaneous combination, in which thy image, without at all weakening the two others, will ever preponderate.

Having thus indicated to thee my new emotions, inspired by the completion of our normal union, I should now, as in former effusions, expound the chief events of my life since our last annual conversation.

The very month* in which my final transformation of thee from Companion to Patroness was effected, I deeply felt this improvement of thy holy worship. For in truth I shall henceforth invoke thee more and more as Mother, in proportion to the development of my second life, of which thou alone art source and soul. Here the contrast between our ages is effaced by moral superiority, as was foreseen by Dante when, as a son, he followed the steps of his celestial guide. The longer I continue my holy course the more do I feel how greatly thy heart surpasses mine, and how preferable is such a superiority to every other. Thus my personal worship becomes in no way exceptional, unless

* June, 1851. Seventh Saint Clotilde.

it be so owing to the unavoidable substitution of a subjective for the objective mother, who, by our fates, could not preside over my chief moral development. Besides this thy tender deference towards her lessens this one anomaly. As part of your angelic harmony, *Lucie** will always honour in Rosalie,† the early source of the germs of these affections, whose development I owed to thee. Towards the end of this dear month, the decisive publication of the sacred volume‡ consolidated this final state of my personal worship, by securing social sanction for thy personal influence.

This natural reaction was worthily manifested from the beginning of the following month,§ when my holy dedication brought to me so many touching congratulations from both sexes. The public approbation of this unexampled invocation was even more decisive and more unanimous than I had predicted to thee. Only a few scandalous tongues attempted an indirect attack, which only brought indignation on them. Thenceforward thy name obtained a truly historical consecration, destined to increase with the universal religion. In the middle of the same month this irrevocable alliance secretly strengthened my worthy reply to the noble letter which completed the great communication|| from the United States,¶ the decisive beginning of which I had just announced to thee. Since that time, I have learnt that this summary exposition of Positive worship has been already as fully appreciated as it could be among a western population, which more than any other is wanting in the moral culture that belonged to the Middle Ages. Owing to their greater liberty, perhaps there shalt thou first receive truly public testimonies of respect. This month of noble hopes ended happily with the renewed prospect of a true successor. A young disciple** who sufficiently combines the three great cerebral conditions,†† offered, by a proof equally decisive and unexpected, the possibility of compensating the failure which I had explained to thee.‡‡ His

* Clotilde de Vaux, referring to her novel. (*Positive Polity*, Vol. I).

† Auguste Comte's mother.

‡ The first volume of the *Positive Polity*.

§ July, 1851.

|| In Dr. Congreve's opinion this communication is the *Opuscule sur le Calendrier* by Henry Edger.

¶ This refers to the group of disciples in Philadelphia and New York, of whom the principal was Mr. Horace Binney Wallace. (*Positive Polity*, II, 12 ; III, 17 ; IV, 7).

** César Lefort.

†† Heart, Intellect, Character. See our Master's theory of the brain, *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

‡‡ Monsieur Pierre Lafitte.

only essential deficiency relates to the encyclopedic preparation, the importance of which he seems, at last, to see, and which he can yet accomplish, if he fail not in perseverance. The like hope has since been confirmed by another disciple* of the same age, who is better initiated in science, and is hardly less eminent in his faculties. I ought not to fear the failure of both, as in the case of the young friend† whose insufficiency of energy greatly neutralises his fine qualities of heart and intellect.

The following month‡ opened auspiciously with the unexpected pronouncement of our precious Church at Lyons. By a decisive letter, an eminent workman,§ invoking thy holy name, consulted me about a matter of private conduct. The admirable correspondence which followed soon showed me the great importance of this new group, with whose noble head|| I afterwards became acquainted. More accessible to feminine influence than the Parisians, and less tainted by political contests, these workmen appreciate better the religious character of Positivism. The new universal doctrine there gains ground especially under this aspect, which necessarily involves all its other attributes. Its practical influence was fully verified during the same month, when the excellent head of the Lyonnese group used it for preventing the deplorable suicide which I thought at first had been committed by the eminent disciple who was momentarily misled by mistaken scruples. Then I had reason to congratulate myself on having long before formally expressed the standing reprobation which Positivism pronounces against so unsociable a proceeding. Thus the Great Being has preserved one of the best organs of our not distant Southern propaganda, supposing his bodily weakness does not neutralise his cerebral superiority.

September began, not less happily, with the unexpected appearance of thy first female adorer.¶ The admirable companion of my best Dutch disciple has shown me for two years a worthy appreciation of thy holy memory. But her feelings were neither clearly expressed nor stated in writing, and I might suspect they were due to her husband's influence, aided by my personal authority. Thy new admirer seemed to me merely an early and

* Dr. Audiffrent. *Uma Visita*, by Senhor Mendes, p. 292.

† Monsieur Pierre Laffitte.

‡ August, 1851.

§ Monsieur Laurent. *Lettres à Divers*, Tome I, part I.

|| Monsieur Lucas.

¶ Mme. de Capellen.

spontaneous result of my weekly apostolate,* completed by my characteristic dedication.† This avowed admiration, the sincerity of which I no longer doubt, for me heralds numerous feminine adhesions, all the more that it proceeds from a middle-aged lady, so little distinguished, even by her heart, as not to have at once accepted the law of Positive widowhood. Another of thy young admirers, more promising, though less emancipated, in fact offers to me the prospect of realising this just hope. The middle of September was deeply marked by an important advance in the Positive Religion, which worthily emanated from a noble opportunity in private life. Thus the consultation from Lyons led me to institute the general principle of chaste marriage. Though originally designed for the exceptional case of the admirable silk-weaver, it may at once be systematically adopted for the regulation of human births. This was never yet attempted by any religion, notwithstanding empirical remonstrances by doctors. When announcing this decisive step to thee, I am happy to compare our exceptional disposition towards a union of this sort, which was prescribed to us by moral considerations, no less potent than the physical reasons of the noble Lyonnese. The end of the same month offered another religious interest, when an eminent disciple‡ made me a touching appeal suitably to recompense the holy material providence offered to him by his venerable hostess. This sweet intervention, as regards the excellent widow,§ specially tended to strengthen my recent hope|| that the young heart capable of such an inspiration, might become my noble successor. If the ingenuous Flemish lady shows a sufficient appreciation of my sacerdotal letter, by expressing her resolution of bequeathing it to descendants, the proposed pecuniary reward will afford me in a different manner, a personal satisfaction as great as her own.

The beginning of October was rendered no less remarkable by the happy visit of the eminent Genoese,¶ whose decisive adhesion I had announced to thee. But I was thus enabled to confirm and to explain the deficiency of energy which renders

* The lectures on Positivism delivered by our Master on Sundays.

† To the *Positive Polity*.

‡ Lefort.

§ This relates to a pension instituted by Auguste Comte and contributed by his disciples. Monsieur Audiffrent writes (*Uma V'isita*, p. 293) : ' César Lefort was saved from a death by poverty and hunger which awaited him at Brussels by the landlady of the hotel in which he was staying.

|| See p. 409.

¶ Signor Benedetto Profumo. See *Correspondence Inédite d'A. Comte*, Vol. III.

him unfit for the important office at first reserved for him by me as the leader of Positivism in Italy. Besides my personal recollections, his short visit will always remind me of the Occidental dinner which concluded it, when my solitary table exceptionally inaugurated meetings at once fraternal and invigorating. Some days later this excellent disciple quitted the metropolis of Positivism, but not till after the admirable meeting for the concluding lecture, which, in the space of five hours, resumed my third religious course, finally condensed in a decisive declaration.* This characteristic sitting confirmed the powerful adherence of the noble artist† who, before the same month had ended, offered to execute my likeness in two forms.‡ Informing thee of this generous proposal, now in course of execution, I can congratulate myself that this exceptional type unexpectedly affords a decisive sanction to the whole of our esthetic theory.

During the same month the Positive religion gained a touching personal advance, when a young couple,§ after three years' conjugal experience, spontaneously asked me to draw the union closer by a solemn engagement of widowhood. While coarse hearts and superficial intellects persevered in maintaining that such an institution was impracticable, it was thus specially and unmistakably confirmed.

In the following month|| this holy intention was happily completed by the spontaneous choice of a worthy godmother for the sweet female child whom the same husband and wife wished to incorporate with Positivism. Our incomparable Sophie felt it an honour to accept their joint wish, which combined her with the distinguished theorician¶ whose marriage I had consecrated the previous year. In this memorable case Positivist fraternity was completed by giving thy holy name to this young type of the future woman. Could I hope that hearts unknown to thee would so promptly sanction thy worship? These delightful emotions greatly helped my immediate resumption of the great work** which was interrupted by my lectures. Hardly was it recommenced when my religious elaboration underwent a fresh

* This declaration was textually cited by our Master in the opening sentence of the Preface to his Positivist Catechism.

† Monsieur Etex.

‡ A painting and a bust.

§ Dr. and Madame Robinet.

November, 1851.

¶ See p. 304. Dr. Segond.

** The *Positive Policy*, Vol. II.

'blow,* by the unexpected conclusion of my final spoliation, which Polytechnic enmities seemed to have postponed for a year. Opening my heart to thee, I can now claim the honour of having peacefully continued my philosophic construction in the midst of this fresh iniquity.† It had no direct effect except that of inspiring a new act of self-denial. I extended my previous renunciation of all literary profit to the complete gratuity of my twofold office, in reference to our Occidental Review.‡ The sacred work was afterwards only interrupted by the admirable letter§ which, in consequence of this catastrophe, I received from the noble head of the degenerate school.

The final month,|| at its outset, was marked by my suitable reply to this unexpected alleviation of the blow. On the morrow a memorable political crisis at once forcibly diverted my thoughts and suggested a decisive application. Hardly was its true nature manifested when,—amid general discouragement, and in spite of the outcry made by almost all my disciples,—I nobly constructed my theory of the dictatorship, which the majority of them have now adopted. Then it became possible to appreciate, in a special way, my firmness in having, at the beginning of this year, irrevocably separated the Positivist party from that of revolutionists pure and simple. For this normal attitude, already sufficiently declared, averted the disastrous inconsistency which would have resulted from their shameful defeat. The divergency of opinions which thus arose in our young association** even tended towards an early elimination of its less advanced members. Among these spontaneous purifications, I congratulate myself on the irrevocable retreat of the distinguished writer†† whom I had hitherto treated as my chief colleague, although his importance was solely due to his careful work, undistinguished by any cerebral superiority.‡‡ This decisive experience showed a radical deficiency of energy, and even

* Our Master's deprivation of his remaining appointment—Répétiteur in the Polytechnic School, November, 1851.

† Our Master had been deprived of his principal office, Examiner for admission of candidates to the Polytechnic School, in 1844.

‡ Auguste Comte as Editor and Contributor. This project was afterwards rejected by our Master as being inconsistent with his Sacerdotal office. (*Synthèse Subjective*, Vol. I. Preface, pp. xiv, xv.)

§ General Bonnet. Commandant de l'Ecole Polytechnique (*Correspondence inédite*, Vol. IV.)

|| December, 1851.

¶ December 2nd, 1851, the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon.

** The *Société Positiviste* established by Auguste Comte in 1848.

†† Monsieur Littré.

‡‡ M. Littré's exposition of the Positive Philosophy.

of dignity, which I could not have suspected in him. Thus I was at once obliged to withdraw the high political position, which during three years I had felt satisfaction in assigning to him.* However, his deplorable desertion did not raise any serious apprehensions of a Positivist schism. Before the end of this decisive month, it had only harmed himself, by showing his incompetence to participate in the new advance of our doctrines, which every one had begun to expect from the dictatorship. The last week of this memorable year specially indicated this noble future, by the two religious celebrations sufficiently prepared during the two preceding months. This exceptional concurrence of two social Sacraments[†] allowed me to satisfy the touching tenderness of the young couple without incurring the frivolous criticisms which the previous marriage had aroused. Such a precedent will henceforward warrant a more complete celebration of the law of widowhood, specially extended to marriages already consummated, superior souls being thus made to feel more fully the inadequacy of their existing bond. Further, this last month afforded me a deep satisfaction, by the affectionate visit of the eminent Southern disciple,[‡] whom last year I mentioned to thee as the man who first appreciated thee, and whose appreciation has since been entirely confirmed by my Dedication and thy Composition.[§] Thus admitted for seven weeks to my personal intimacy, this young apostle completely realised the high estimate of his heart and intellect, which his letters had suggested. Although his energy may not rank so high, his fortunate material circumstances will, I hope, allow him to make good use of his noble nature. His admirable and spontaneous resolution to remedy the distress of a worthy comrade, will soon supply a decisive example of Positivist fraternity, equally advantageous to these two eminent disciples.

At the beginning of this new year,[¶] my solemn reception of our large family^{**} directly supplied an illustration of the recent practical test,^{††} which more clearly showed that regeneration when merely intellectual, was insufficient. He^{‡‡} whose memorable

* This refers to the triumvirate government contemplated by Auguste Comte.

† Marriage and Presentation. See p. 412.

‡ Dr. Audiffrent. See p. 301.

§ *Positive Policy*, Vol. I, and *Luce*.

¶ Cesar Lefort, whom Dr. Audiffrent received in his house to enable him to pursue his mathematical studies. His future conduct towards our Master and Dr. Audiffrent was not satisfactory. (*Uma Visita*, p. 203.)

¶ January, 1852.

** Adherents to Positivism.

†† Auguste Comte's view of the fall of Parliamentaryism.

‡‡ M. Littré.

preface had just proclaimed that the Positive Philosophy was adequate to prevent discouragement and hasty passions, presently became more discouraged and passionate than any other disciple. Invariably putting intellect in the place of heart, his revolutionary routine attributed to philosophy what only belongs to religion. Such a falling off clearly illustrated how much more conduct depends on our feelings than on our convictions, nay more, that the latter waver on the least shock, if not sustained by the former. But my frequent advice to practise moral culture can only become really efficacious through estimable feminine influence, still wanting for nearly all my disciples. If the eminent consort of my noble Dutch disciple* can at last institute a genuine Positivist drawing-room, this serious deficiency will be better understood and even supplied, though nothing can dispense with home influence. In the absence of this twofold help from women, our association† tends to early dissolution. This can only be averted by a better growth of mutual fraternity and of veneration shared by all. Immediately after this characteristic commencement came the decisive Circular‡ in which I publicly announced my final circumstances. These afford me no protection against penury but a voluntary contribution, which is still inadequate. Such a necessary explanation having been nobly accomplished, I immediately resumed the quiet progress of my holy construction,§ which had been usefully suspended by the urgent crisis of the dictatorship.|| The end of this first month afforded me a satisfaction, as valuable as it was unexpected, in the admirable act of justice publicly done to me by a worthy American adversary,¶ whose touching enthusiasm contrasts with the personal coolness of the chief exponent** of my philosophy.

Under this happy impulse February began with the exceptional step—which I consider opportune, though its direct result is uncertain—my noble appeal, inviting my generous antagonists to subscribe in reparation of my unjust dismissal.†† The

* M. de Capellen, one of the thirteen executors named by Auguste Comte in his Will.—p. 472.

† *Société Positiviste*.

‡ Third Annual Circular, dated 5th January, 1852. The yearly amount fixed by Auguste Comte for the subscription was 7,000 francs, of which 2000 francs were for Madame Comte and 5000 francs for his own maintenance. Any amount over the 7,000 francs would be for the propaganda of the Religion of Humanity, especially for supporting its Priesthood or Apostleship.

§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. II.

|| Of Louis Napoleon.

¶ Dr. McClintock (see *Positive Polity*, Vol. II, p. 23, for Auguste Comte's letter to him, dated 7 Homer, 64, 4th February, 1852.)

** M. Littré.

†† See the previous notes.

precious disciple,* who had just devoted to thee his child as a Positivist, afterwards offered a new application of our religion, as affording consolation for the deepest sorrows. Hastening to the dying moments of his excellent mother, he was able to obtain her admirable conversion† that prompted the holy letter by which I conferred on the heroic sufferer our last objective sacrament,‡ through the agency of her devoted son. Although domestic considerations prevented his reading my letter for the occasion, he keeps it carefully as a decisive memorial of the fitness of Positivism to console and to judge. The subjective compensations which he already derives from our personal worship prove the private efficacy of the new religion, already manifested in reference to all other domestic bonds. This month ended with another interruption of my treatise on Social Statics§ on account of my decisive Manifesto,|| addressed to my civic patron, on the attitude of Positivism towards the dictatorship in France. The publication of this letter shows the actual realisation of a new Spiritual Power capable of speaking worthily to all Temporal Powers. Thy holy influence is there nobly evidenced, as the secret source of the sacerdotal development of Positivism, which is henceforward engaged in promoting Order even more than Progress.

Having thus announced my irrevocable determination to live henceforward only by the contributions of my adherents, in the following month¶ with full confidence I took up again my great composition.§ Then, for the first time, I felt called on to work habitually without any professional interruption. Nobly entrusting my physical life to the patronage of the West, I spontaneously gave my whole attention to my cerebral life, this being directly devoted to the essential service of Humanity. Having thus wisely arranged my weekly task, without haste or strain, I foresaw the near completion of this decisive volume.** Its immediate publication was secured beyond my hope, by the scrupulous realisation of the admirable

* Dr. Robinet. See p. 412.

† See this letter in the *Correspondence Inédite* d'A. Comte, Vol. III.

‡ Transformation. Eighth Sacrament conferred on Madame Robinet *mère* (Virginie Chardoillet). See last note.

§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. II.

|| *Positive Polity*, Vol. II. Letters of Auguste Comte to M. Vieillard.

¶ March, 1852.

** *Positive Polity*, Vol. II. Social Statics, which established the theory of the Spiritual and Temporal Powers (Church and State), and finally separated Sociology from Morals, which thus became the seventh and crowning science in our Master's hierarchy of the abstract sciences.

guarantee* which assured the printing of the first volume. This unexpected act of devotedness by my young patron soon led the honourable printer to a spontaneous offer of his services for the new volume, without requiring any special engagements such as had been nobly offered to me. In fact, the printing began at the end of this month, though my volume was not completely written.

While it rapidly advanced to completion, I celebrated our fatal anniversary† by the secret outpouring which obliged me momentarily to suspend my profound elaboration. It made me feel more forcibly that I should constantly endeavour to improve the construction‡ which is irrevocably bound up with thee. For the honour due to thee, as for my own, I shall henceforward make every effort during my last ten years§ of full cerebral vigour.

In April, with that exception, no other events occurred but the beginning of a memorable English appreciation, which is continued with a rare assiduity, and the admirable reply of my loyal American antagonist,|| who directly accepted my exceptional step. Now that conscientious adversaries have publicly elevated me to the height of Aristotle and Bacon, and have even pronounced me to be essentially superior to all ancient and modern philosophers, I can, without presumption, say to thee, *Aristotle and St. Paul have been combined by thy influence*. The end of the same month happily made thy sweet annual new birth coincide with the finishing of my new volume.¶

Its Preface has just announced that my third volume will be preceded by an episodical work,** in which the exposition of Positivism will become decisively systematised, by a happy condensation that I had not expected so soon to have accomplished.

May commenced—while I suffered from a serious bodily trouble—with my just solution of the chief difficulty appertaining to this exceptional minor work. By choosing thee as the holy catechumen I admirably experienced the fundamental reaction of the heart on the intellect. The sympathies already roused by this

*The guarantee given by Monsieur Joseph Lonchampt for the expense of printing the *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

† The death of Clotilde de Vaux, 5th April.

‡ The Religion of Humanity as expounded in the *Positive Polity*.

§ 1853-1862. Auguste Comte died 5th September, 1857.

|| Dr. McClintock, and Auguste Comte's invitation to him to subscribe for his support.

¶ *Positive Polity*, Vol. II.

** *The Positivist Catechism*, published in 1852.

delightful project made me feel certain of its normal execution, which I have decided to begin at the end of thy Positivist festival.* Next year I hope to show thee the precious results of this direct collaboration, which has, in the most essential case, been openly established between us. My having announced it was probably a sufficient suggestion to our eminent artist† of the touching inspiration which he submitted to me on the very day when my new volume appeared. Converting a simple portrait into a true picture,‡ he represents thee as subjectively inspiring my religious construction. The presence of my two other angels further sanctifies this admirable symbolical group, which characterises our worship and initiates our art. Thus begins the normal regimen, under which each male type will be glorified, with the addition of all his true female auxiliaries. It would not be possible to indicate in a better way how human life can unquestionably only be constituted by intimately fusing the twofold nature of man and woman. During this month these sweet emotions have been doubly confirmed by touching appeals, which bear testimony both to the spread of Positivist worship, and its tendency to promote thy holy adoration. Thy angelic patronage will soon enable worthy proletaries, whom a fatality, too easily explained, deprives of true domestic types, to practise personal worship. Far from objecting to such adoration sincerely addressed to thee in private, it will afford me a fuller appreciation of thy incomparable nature, and a clearer anticipation of thy worship throughout the West. At the same time, a new disciple has nobly requested my communication to him of the sacred effusion which each day I address to thee, in reference to the holy female companion whose posthumous adoration he instituted by my advice. Since I have complied with his ingenuous request, my daily prayer has become more precious, by virtue of this happy power of relieving the sorrows of others. Thus the gradual realisation of my chief forecasts assures me of the great veneration which the West will soon devote to our united memories. During this very colloquy, a spontaneous request has specially confirmed this inestimable prospect. The young husband and father,§ whom I have several times mentioned, has been pleased to under-

* 22nd Charlemagne, 64 (8th of July, 1852, Leap Year), which is the day of [Saint Clotilde in the Historical Calendar of Positivism.

† Monsieur Etex.

‡ This refers to the picture by M. Etex, which represented Auguste Comte writing before his 'three angels'—Clotilde de Vaux, his Mother, and his adopted daughter Sophie (Mme. Thomas.)

§ Dr. Robinet.

take more direct relations with thee by his vow of periodical visits to thy holy tomb, which I am happy to authorise, as a real beginning of thy universal adoration. Could I hope for so worthy an ending of the last month of my annual statement? I cannot finish it without acquainting thee with the recent happiness of our Sophie by the definitive return of her second son,* of whose care she voluntarily deprived herself for four years in order to serve me better. Besides the satisfaction I experience from habitually contemplating her merited felicity, perhaps this son of my excellent daughter by adoption will personally deserve my constant patronage. May he procure for me at once a sweet increase of domestic affection, a sincere adorer of thy memory, and a true servant of the Great Being, with whom thou art irrevocably incorporated.

This new utterance, though effected under a passing indisposition, makes me strongly feel the precious yearly increase of our holy identification, henceforth to be recognised almost as much publicly as privately. Since the publication of the sacred volume,† choice souls increasingly sanction, and even share more or less, my tender veneration for thee. My disciples, when accepting my recent addition of Elisa Mercœur‡ to our Western Calendar, have felt that a like honour was withheld from thee only because thou hast been recently associated with my own glory.§ Thus is spontaneously prepared the solemn request,|| which three years ago I announced to thee as the worthy termination of my great religious construction. The opportuneness of this decisive aspiration has already been so fully recognised that I could confide it to my best disciples without causing any surprise, other than that called forth by their admiration for my touching claim to such a reward. Approbation of this kind will be increasingly shown during the two years which must elapse before this final manifestation. Its realisation may be made certain before thou receivest me in the eternal tomb. The picture now being sketched¶ will soon announce silently, but with emphasis, this definitive union of our bodies, which the harmony of our souls will procure through the irresistible gratitude of the regenerated West.

The sweet and prompt influence of my present effusion will impart a salutary impulse to my public duties, and may suggest

*Paul Thomas—still living (1907).

†*Positive Polity*, Vol. I, which contains Auguste Comte's Dedication to Clotilde de Vaux.

‡ See the Positivist Calendar, 27 Dante, where Elisa Mercœur is placed with Shelley, both as adjuncts for Leap Year to Byron.

§ See the Fifth Saint Clotilde, 1849.

|| For a common grave.

¶ By Etex. See previous note, p. 418.

some happy inspirations. Nothing could furnish a better preparation for the approaching commencement of my fourth religious course of lectures, which under the new republican situation, may acquire greater prominence. After this decisive inauguration of the true priesthood, I shall begin the exceptional minor work* in which thy special co-operation† should still more utilise my present emotions. Even when commencing later the third volume of my principal treatise, I shall finish this favoured year with a stronger feeling that our irrevocable identity approaches, being both guaranteed and hastened by my persevering activity as a philosopher. The new encyclopedic steps, effected with the volume I am commencing, will most surely predominate in all the rest of my religious construction. By placing Morals at the head of the theoretical hierarchy—in this way better joined to the practical hierarchy‡—I more completely condense Positivism, abstract and concrete, in our fundamental maxim: *Live for others*. Worthy readers of thy *Lucie* will soon be reminded how this condensation was anticipated by thy heart in this touching thought: *Can any pleasures exceed those of devotedness?* This holy conformity makes me, whether as thy objective father, or as thy subjective child, feel more deeply our most special maxim:

Eternal love and respect.

AUGUSTE COMTE

Professor of Positive Philosophy

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

O amanza del primo amore, o diva,

Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda

Che basti a render voi grazia per grazia.§

VIVRE POUR AUTRUI

Voilà le vrai bonheur, comme le vrai devoir, et toi seule m'appris à fondre leurs formules!

Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te !||

* *The Positivist Catechism.*

† See p. 417.

‡ The separation of Sociology from Morals, the latter being a new science, the seventh and last in the series of abstract sciences as constituted by Auguste Comte.

§ Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto IV.—

O love of the first love, oh goddess

Affection fails me to requite thy grace

With equal sum of gratitude.

|| Live for others.

Here is real happiness, and here is real duty. Thou alone hast taught me to weld the two together.

May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee.

My Ninth Saint Clotilde

OUR FINAL STATE

*Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda
Che basti a render voi grazia per grazia.**

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY.]

Begun on 2 Gutenberg, 65 ; continued on the morrow, and finished the day after ;
to be read at the holy Tomb, on Wednesday, 31st August.

Paris, 2 Gutenberg, 65
(Sunday, 14 August, 1853)

NOBLE AND TENDER PATRONESS

My fourth celebration† of thy holy festival‡ was unavoidably delayed for three weeks in order to finish the decisive Discourse§ which worthily began the public statement of thy eternal influence on me. Five years later a similar necessity has obliged me to wait nearly three months so as not to interrupt the preparations, exceptionally continuous, of the precious volume|| which I completed on Sunday, then invoking thee as at its outset. I am thus led to make this effusion, so delayed, coincide with the best Festival¶ of the ancient faith, the spontaneous forecast by tender hearts of their adoration of the Great Being, and that I have consecrated for the approaching glorification of Woman. Moreover, this year, as in the two preceding years, this delay affords me the satisfaction of associating our solemn conversation with the publication of a new volume** of my principal treatise. Next year I hope to complete this holy coincidence by finishing my religious construction†† when I begin our tenth effusion

* Affection fails me to requite thy grace

With equal sum of gratitude.

† 1848, 25th of June.

‡ The day of Saint Clotilde, 3rd of June.

§ *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*, pronounced in 1847, published in 1848, and reprinted in the first volume of the *Positive Polity*, 1851.

|| *Positive Polity*, Vol. III.

¶ The Catholic Festival of the Virgin, 15th August.

** *Positive Polity*, Vol. III, *Philosophy of History*, 1853.

†† *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, 1854.

Our celebration on this occasion is more solemn than that of any previous year, because it happens at the time which our religion has appointed for the definitive judgment of each memory, seven years after the objective decease.* I have now acquired the sacerdotal authority requisite for such a decision, which, though concerning my deepest affection, will cast no doubt on my equitable judgment. Only three years had elapsed since our catastrophe when, in our holy conversation,† I ventured to pronounce thy irrevocable incorporation with the Great Being. Two years later the publication of my dedication enabled me to gather the spontaneous adhesion of choice souls to this anticipated judgment. Therefore I, as High Priest of Humanity, do not now hesitate to ratify maturely the early decision which personal affection had inspired. It may perhaps be right to render this spontaneous source systematic by always declaring after three years‡ a provisional judgment, with a final revision at the end of seven years. Such a subdivision of the Subjective Sacrament§ would allow the priesthood to base its definitive judgment on public opinion, as manifested during four years|| in reference to the preparatory judgment.

Henceforward irrevocably incorporated with Humanity thou dost offer to all, as intimately as to myself, her best personification. Next year this definitive judgment will be solemnly promulgated by the exceptional Invocation,¶ which will worthily end my religious construction. But with this my power ends, until Positive worship shall have been publicly organised. Shall I ever enjoy the incomparable satisfaction of presiding over the solemn transfer of thy remains to the chosen tomb, which shall be for ever common to both of us? Although no true Positivist now ignores thy co-operation with me, the best of them do not, I consider, sufficiently realise our identification.** The inspirations which last year†† spontaneously arose in favour of thy universal worship, have hitherto been too limited, and even not sufficiently stable.

* 1846-1853.

† The Fifth Saint Clotilde, 1849. The first two were dated 2nd June, 1845 (*Letter on Social Commemoration*), and 4th October, 1846 (*Dedication of the Positive Polity*, published in the first volume, 1851.

‡ This was afterwards altered by our Master to four years.

§ Incorporation.

|| Afterwards reduced by our Master to three years.

¶ This Invocation, which terminates the fourth and concluding volume of the *Positive Polity* corresponds to the Dedication that begins the first volume of the same work. See p. 331.

** See the Fourth Saint-Clotilde, p. 349.

†† 1852. See the Eighth Saint Clotilde, p. 419.

Excepting a few passing impulses, no one habitually regards our intimate connexion as constituting my chief reward, as to which my concluding Invocation* will rightly anticipate the public instinct.

While the universal worship of thee, though not adequately practised, has become quite assured, our subjective union has taken its final shape as simply continuing what our objective connexion would have presented. So completely does our private existence harmonise with our public life, that my heart could not reach stability until my intellect had shaped an institution adequate to confer a systematic form on our intimacy. But since our Catechism† has consecrated the institution of chaste marriage, my fluctuation of feeling as regards the mode—secret or open—suitable to our union, has for ever vanished. I can now attribute to thee every feminine relationship, invoking thy help as sister, daughter, and even mother, according to the character of thy influence. Nevertheless, I shall always avoid the indefiniteness with which such variation might affect my adoration, by subordinating these different attributions to that of the chaste wife, which alone resumes our relations. Our subjective intimacy is henceforth limited to developing the final character of our objective harmony, in which legal adoption‡ was to have taken the place of a chaste marriage.

Our holy intimacy being thus freed from fluctuation will henceforward develop itself constantly. This development more and more becomes a daily necessity for my heart, since in no other way can I obtain adequate sympathies. I have long hoped to convert my best disciples into true friends who might, worthily and fully, correspond to my habitual effusions, but I have with sadness recognised that relations with them—intellectual rather than moral—together with inequality of age, deprive me of such satisfaction. Having too much lowered my proper paternal attitude, by a delusive brotherhood, I feel that, as my just authority grows, I should content myself with enthusiastic veneration, renouncing all other sentiments towards myself. Although happily our Sophie affords me more complete satisfaction, this, owing to the difference of our education, and especially of social position, is insufficient. So I must limit myself to the near view of her domestic happiness. Thou alone couldst offer me that

* Of the *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV. See p. 331.

† The *Positivist Catechism*, composed and published in 1852 by Auguste Comte.

‡ See p. 406.

entire harmony, and this will always make me bitterly deplore our objective separation. Under this insurmountable fatality, our subjective union constitutes the only resource for my heart which henceforward shall be developed as much as possible, while I renounce every other kind of intimacy.

Without dwelling any longer on this preliminary matter, I shall now, as usual, begin the review of what has happened affecting us since our last conversation.

The month* when this conversation took place offers me only one lasting memory, that of the results already realised by the publication of my principal volume. All competent minds then recognised that I had affected the most difficult and decisive portion of my great construction, so as to confirm the authority of my name, thus comparable with that of Aristotle.

To the following month† I first refer the commencement of our Catechism on the very day of thy Positivist festival.‡ This holy composition, in which our co-operation became direct, was thenceforward continued without interruption. July, 1852, also recalls to my memory the decisive attitude of a young banker.§ who promises to become for Positivism an eminent practician, and whose devotedness, ever since increasing, was shown by a generous initiative.

While pursuing our sweet co-operation, | I received in August two impressions opposite in nature. One of these arose out of the precious visit of the young theorician,¶ who, I hoped, might deserve to be my successor, but whose inadequacy I began to feel, though not clearly understanding the reason. During his stay in Paris, there arrived the letter, strange rather than unexpected, which decided my fortunate rupture with the able writer,** whom I had honoured too much in spite of his undeserved submission to the most pernicious of women.

September began with the admirable declaration of a celebrated revolutionist,†† who from his prison spontaneously invoked

* June, 1852.

† July, 1852.

‡ The Positivist Festival of Clotilde. Historical Calendar of Positivism, by Auguste Comte, 22nd day of the month Charlemagne, 8th July, 1852 (Leap Year), Saint-Clotilde. See p. 418.

§ M. Deullin of Epervay. See letters of Auguste Comte to him, Nos. 5-9. *Correspondence in d'c d'A. Comte*, Tome I. Proposal by M. Deullin, to assist our Master in his publications.

|| *Positivist Catechism*.

¶ This was probably M. Lefort (*Unité Positive*, pp. 233-4).

** M. Littré, see *Correspondence in d'c d'A. Comte*, Tome II, p. 20.

†† M. Barbès.

Positivism as a regenerative influence; and this was sketched out for him in my reply*. A few days later I duly completed our exceptional little work† regretting the end of a collaboration, so dear to my heart. The happy visit of a noble professor‡ indicated to me the importance of secret adhesions gained by Positivism in a portion of the British world, apparently the most hostile, even among the official classes. In the middle of this month I gave effect to the most important step, resulting from the recent rupture, by definitively assuming the direction of the subscription instituted for my support,§ so as to regulate my financial situation. The last week of September suddenly revealed to me the serious usurpation attempted by the puerile ambition of the head|| of our group in Lyons. His co-operation, too highly rated, soon obliged me to employ an energetic repression which, though successful, alienated this ally.

October will always remind me of the definitive publication of our Catechism, henceforward the systematic basis of the Positivist propaganda, which it consolidates and even hastens. In the middle of this month an unforeseen event arose—well fitted to furnish an adequate proof that our regeneration is real—when a widow¶ by anticipation invoked the providential help I had systematically instituted.

In the following month** this collective patronage was nobly organised under my influence, thus combining two Positivist duties: eternal widowhood and the support of woman by man. The beginning of November had afforded me, at thy holy tomb, an unexpected satisfaction, when the unforeseen meeting with thy old father†† procured for me the personal expression of his touching gratitude for my weekly worship of thee.

In December I must first record the sacred visit of the eminent American,‡‡ whose approaching decease I was far from dreading, notwithstanding the sad tone of his farewell. Some days later

* See references to M. Barbès. *Correspondence Inédite d'A. Comte*, I, 89, 90, 174; II, 149, 151, 168, 229. The Reply of Auguste Comte has not been published.

† *Positivist Catechism*.

‡ Dr. Congreve. See *Correspondence Inédite d'A. Comte*, I, 96.

§ This subscription was afterwards generalised by our Master as the Sacerdotal Subscription. See the Eight Annual Circulars, 1850-57, of Auguste Comte, translated by Dr. Congreve, particularly the Circular of 1853.

|| Monsieur Lucas. See *Correspondence Inédite d'A. Comte*, I, p. 91.

¶ Madame Francelle. See *Correspondence Inédite d'A. Comte*, I, 145.

** November, 1852.

†† M. Marie, senior.

‡‡ Mr. Horace Binney Wallace.

I worthily accomplished, in the preface to my next volume,* the decisive manifesto addressed to the Czar, which will characterise Positivism for all true conservatives. The year ended with my just refusal—in spite of the intervention of persons I respected—to entertain a mistaken reconciliation, intended to annul a rupture,† which had become as necessary to make my position clear as it was for my dignity in public and private life.

I opened 1853 by a third solemn reception of my true disciples, whom I could then congratulate on their progress in veneration and fraternity, since my late remonstrance, and my judicious elimination. But this touching act of respect left me secretly regretting that the gratitude of Positivists had not ascended to thee, as the strong effect of our Catechism had led me to hope. These collective demonstrations will be thoroughly satisfactory to me only when thou shalt be openly honoured by them, either on New Year's Day, on the anniversary of our catastrophe,‡ or on the day of thy festival.§ Nevertheless, I can express these regrets only to thyself, thus respecting the spontaneity which makes the chief value of free testimonies of respect, and awaiting their full ripeness. The end of January was marked by the most important of my Annual Circulars,|| which concerned the sacerdotal subscription. Its publication in print indicated the serious character of these contributions. They are no longer to be merely personal to myself, but constitute a decisive institution, which directly establishes the Positivist Clergy, destined soon to supply true helpers for me. Although the subscription has not attained its normal amount,¶ its steady increase makes me hope this will be reached. That circular has nobly intimated my unchangeable resolve to preserve the holy domicile.

February began with the unexpected letter from Philadelphia, which informed me of the recent death of my best American disciple** a few days after his touching visit. This catastrophe has deprived the Great Being of a valuable servant just at his entrance upon maturity. His final intentions for my benefit—

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. III.

† With M. Littré.

‡ 5th April.

§ The Catholic Saint's day of Saint Clotilde, 3rd of June.

|| The fourth Circular, 1853.

¶ This was 7,000 francs, of which 2,000 were destined to pay Madame Comte's annuity, 5,000 being for the support of Auguste Comte. The full amount was reached in the year before Auguste Comte's death, as intimated in his twelfth and last Annual Circular of 1857.

** Horace Binney Wallace.

faithfully carried out by his excellent brother—converted his subscription, so freely given, into an annuity for life. Some days later I achieved the opening up of the normal relations of Positivism with progressive governments by addressing a communication to the Grand Vizier, equivalent to that with which I had honoured the Czar. My various preambles thus finished, I began the important volume,* which is now completed; this supplied me during six months with constant work, which, carried on without hurry or fatigue, enabled me to appreciate my normal state. From the outset of this elaboration began the interesting connection which specially associates me with the great Jefferson, through the American diplomatist who became the husband of his grand-daughter. At the end of this month came the decisive interview which an eminent baronet,† had contemplated while in India and which announced to me the likelihood of an early reception of Positivism by British conservatives. Unhappily I must refer to the same time the defection, henceforward irrevocable, of the distinguished artist,‡ on whose adhesion I had reckoned too confidently in the preceding year, but who will never escape from the revolutionary mire.

March first recalls to me the declaration, doubly decisive, of my completely giving up of the second successor,§ in whom my hopes had been prematurely raised, without having sufficiently tried him.

This new disappointment was not due, as the first,|| to want of energy, but to intellectual inadequacy, which, however, would not exclude this noble disciple from the priesthood of Positivism. The grief I felt from being obliged to make such a decision—which however, he took very well—would indispose me to announce a third selection without having first taken all proper precautions. When, towards the end of this month, I received the second visit of the best of my disciples¶ residing out of Paris, I made sure that my resolve had in no way affected his fraternal help to the mistaken successor.** The shortness of this visit did not prevent its confirming my

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. III The Philosophy of History.

† Sir Erskine Perry. See *Lettres d'A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 2 p. 135; and Interview of Sir Erskine Perry with Auguste Comte, *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1877.

‡ Monsieur Etex.

§ Monsieur Lefort. *Uma Vizita*, p. 295.

|| Monsieur Laffitte.

¶ Dr. Audiffrent.

** Monsieur Lefort.

previous estimate of the rare harmony between his heart and his intellect, happily completed by an adequate strength of character, at first overlooked by me.

As in the preceding year, the first week of April gave rise to the noble effusion which, during one sacred hour, suspended my great construction, in order to celebrate the seventh anniversary of our catastrophe. The advent of my final judgment of thee made me feel more distinctly that its confirmation consisted, above all, in more fully developing the philosophic efficacy of the holy influence which dominates my second life. In the middle of this mournful month a precious disciple* enabled me, unknown to him, to find in the excellent mother whom he lost in the preceding year the subjective sister who now, each Wednesday, visits with me the sacred tomb. This unforeseen acquisition, while facilitating my oblivion of a tie now dissolved, completes our holy family, of which my spiritual father, the great Condorcet† will be the head. At the end of this month the admirable thoughtfulness of the noble brother of the unfortunate Wallace enabled me to pay the arrears, long due, of my rent, though I may still be obliged to incur similar, though shorter delays.

The opening of May gave me the satisfaction of seeing the printing of my new volume begun, my generous printer‡ no longer asking for the guarantees I then proposed, but which henceforward if offered would seem to imply a distrust of his noble confidence. To the middle of this month I refer the desertion, probably for ever, of the imperfect proselyte, who attracted me by his pretended admiration for thee, although his general conduct in no way corresponded to this profession. His mental and moral vulgarity, like his barren and pretended zeal, prevent my regretting his loss; and this was soon compensated by the decisive acquisition of an interesting couple.§ A woman, energetic yet tender, converted by an intelligent and devoted husband, came with him to ask me for the Positivist consecration of their previous union, and especially for their mutual engagement of eternal widowhood. The end of this month was marked by my Dutch portrait,|| the excellence of which will always recall the ability

* Dr. Robinet. See p. 416.

† Author of the *Sketch of History*, the introduction to which helped Auguste Comte to create his *Philosophy of History*.

‡ Monsieur Thunot.

§ Jean and Matilde Bazalgette, the consecration of their marriage took place on 7th July, 1853.

|| This was the lithograph founded on the daguerrotype of Auguste Comte, now at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

of an artist who never saw me, and the zeal of the noble patroness of the work.

In the beginning of June I had at last the happiness of seeing the department* of my birth supply a worthy adherent to Positivism, whose liberal contribution to the subscription for me at once marked his devotedness. Although I have not yet seen him, his visit to the Provençal group† has confirmed for me the sincerity of the disposition shown in his enthusiastic letters. Such adhesions point to the near ascendancy of the Positive Religion, in accordance with a situation which inspires decisive thoughts on the only issue of the Western crisis.

At the beginning of the following month‡ this well-justified hope was strengthened by a manifestation, more striking though less decisive, when an enthusiastic disciple, brought especially by our Catechism, addressed me as his spiritual father, and the High Priest of Humanity. The excursion which he specially made to see me, allowed of my verifying the reality of his feelings, but also the vagueness of his convictions and resolutions, probably rectifiable by his excellent heart. In the middle of this month, an accidental circumstance procured for me the unforeseen visit of the most celebrated of existing writers,§ whom I had regarded as being entirely opposed to Positivism. Next day the widowhood,|| for which provision had already been made, having become an accomplished fact, opportunity was given for the first exercise of my priesthood at a funeral, by a public ceremony free from all theological admixture. Some days after, an eminent disciple made a request which, though rather late, decided me to form the resolution, on which I more and more congratulate myself, to maintain in my next preface¶ a generous silence on the clever writer who so well deserved my indignation.** In July, I must not forget the exceptional celebration at which I proclaimed my twofold improvement of the law of widowhood. This made it completely free by authorising its dispensation for adequate reasons, and made a better preparation by the chaste preamble. Towards the end of this month I heard of the near publication in England

* Hérault. Auguste Comte was born in its capital (Montpellier), on the 19th January, 1798.

† At Marseilles, capital of Provence. Dr. Audiffrent was the head of this group.

‡ July, 1853.

§ Michelet.

|| Of Madame Francelle.

¶ *Positive Polity*, Vol. III.

** M. Littré.

of an extensive work on Positivism, a manifestation all the more decisive that it proceeds from an eminent woman* whose heart is on a level with her intellect.

In the first week of August I duly completed my third volume,† which will appear during this month. Considering the existing disposition towards historic studies, I hope this new volume will enjoy a wider and more rapid success than the two preceding, which it will make more intelligible. Its prompt and peaceful execution is, above all, due to the mental and moral expansion developed in me by our Catechism, in which Positivism can be clearly grasped as a vast whole. This incomparable voyage through the entire range of human history will facilitate all my future labours by making me feel more deeply the influence of the past, of which every phase is henceforward made familiar to me. Doubtless the completion and the publication of this volume will form the only events of this month, combined with the gradual termination of our annual conversation. During the rest of August I shall be delightfully employed with thee, first in improving this effusion, next in rewriting my daily prayers conformably to my natural rule to revise them every seventh year. On the last day‡ of our happiest month I shall go to read this utterance at thy tomb, thus compensating for an inevitable postponement by a special combination of precious recollections.

While finishing this new conversation, I am able to explain to myself the involuntary disturbance produced by an occupation in which I usually have found an immense charm. This unforeseen disquietude solely results from postponing, for eleven weeks, our annual outpouring. This delay, though fully justified by a sacred elaboration,§ has not prevented the deep regret, almost remorse, from which I am not yet entirely free. But I shall finally get over this trouble, compensating it by the coincidence of my postponed reading with our best anniversary,|| when thy festival, this

* Miss Harriet Martineau. Her condensed translation of the *Positive Philosophy* was afterwards placed by Auguste Comte in his Popular Library for the nineteenth century.

† *Positive Polity*, Vol. III, *Philosophy of History*.

‡ 31st August. On Wednesday, Auguste Comte each week visited the grave of Clotilde de Vaux.

§ Composing the *Positive Polity*, Vol. III. See Testament.

|| This refers to 28th August, the day of the baptism in which Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux were sponsors. It was also the day of St. Augustine—Auguste Comte's patron saint—in the Catholic Calendar. See also Tenth Saint-Clotilde, p. 434.

time united with my own, also absorbs those of our excellent sister and our venerable mother.* Such an experience shows me how precious my worship of thee has become to me, since the least change in it moves me deeply.

Our union, my holy Clotilde, is in truth, the best resource of my full maturity, as it will supply the chief support of my approaching old age. Each day I feel more and more how truthful is the appreciation which I have gradually introduced into two of my prayers: 'in spite of the catastrophe† my final situation surpasses all I could hope for, or even dream of, before I knew thee.' Such a declaration should in no wise be deemed exaggerated, considering the fatal isolation from which thou hast rescued me, the burden of which, though I had accepted it, perhaps I could not have borne. Indeed, it is by the scrupulous continuance of thy worship that I have attained this incomparable result of our one year of objective union, and become the basis of our subjective intimacy, which has already continued for a period seven times as long. In proportion as this adoration is prolonged it affords me more vivid and distinct images of thee. Thus I regret little thy portraiture, which I had recently expected. This progress can be estimated by comparing our annual conversations, which, since the year of mourning,‡ showed every two years an advance in my worship of thee, as indicated by the intermediate effusion. That of 1847 pointed to our common grave; of 1849 to thy incorporation with the Great Being; of 1851 to thy universal adoration in consequence of my holy Dedication§; and now this progress is characterised by our final union.

Such adoration bringing me constantly nearer to the normal limit, an ideal revivification of the beloved being, augments my appreciation of the subjective existence, in which all is purified. Thus I feel the value of our complete chastity. This spontaneously frees me from sensual memories that would now have soiled the intercourse of our souls. For hearts worthy of this privileged union, no bond can be compared with that of a chaste marriage, where no personal impulses ever interfere with noble sympathies. The sexual instinct inspires illusions which have exaggerated the satisfactions that the hearts of lovers can obtain from merely sensual pleasures. Excepting only the first experience, as a pledge

* 18th and 4th September.

† Death of Clotilde de Vaux.

‡ This ended 5th April, 1847.

§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

of affection, sensual gratification, essentially egoistic, of necessity debases the happiness due to mutual affection.

Thus I shall subjectively enjoy with thee the entire happiness of a domestic existence that always failed us, but is henceforth assured, since our eternal family has at last been completed. Utilising the privileges of subjectivity, I substitute the great Condorcet for a father who is unworthy of me, without affecting the purity of my holy mother by any artificial supposition, for in reality it is the woman who produces man. The introduction of our admirable sister* presents no real difficulty, and all the other elements of our family directly offer an objective basis. Rosalie Boyer† and Condorcet nobly presiding, I shall fully live with thee as my chaste wife; Virginie Chardoillet being my sister, Adolphe‡ and Wallace§ my brothers; and lastly our Sophie|| for our daughter. This subjective family is naturally connected with several objective families. These will be inseparable from me, in proportion as the Positive Religion becomes lastingly established. The priesthood of Humanity, regarded collectively, constituting the normal bond of our race, its members, considered separately, bind themselves to the life of that family to which they are attached. The authority peculiar to the Founder of the Universal Religion, specially confers upon me this natural bond, as regards the young families which chiefly compose our rising Church.

Among such I shall always consider the best to be the excellent household which daily affords me the spectacle of an admirable union.¶ I shall become more fully incorporated in it, if the last son of our Sophie sufficiently develops the rare combination of essential qualities—of heart, intellect, and character,—which already inspires me with the hope of finding in this young child my true successor. Although this hope must long remain a secret, it now increases the interest I feel in a family closely bound to ours, which ingenuously honours me by including myself in theirs, an inclusion spontaneously ratified even by its external members. Thanks to thee, my *Lucie*,** who art the general source of my moral renovation, I am thus provided with a series of private bonds which must always be multiplied and developed by the exten-

* Virginie Chardoillet, the mother of Dr. Robinet. See pp. 416, 436.

† The maiden name of Auguste Comte's mother.

‡ Adolphe, a younger brother of Auguste Comte, born December, 1802

§ Horace Binney Wallace.

|| Madame Thomas.

¶ Monsieur and Madame Martin Thomas and their children.

** This refers to Clotilde de Vaux's novel. See *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

sions of my public life. But they reciprocally exert on it a precious influence, by leading me to a better cultivation of the affections, subjective especially, which will, more and more, prevail in the normal existence of regenerated Humanity. The importance of these bonds, co-ordinated by our union, is already brought home to me more clearly by the approach of my concluding volume* in which, independently of the various scientific preparations, I shall directly systematise the preponderance of the heart. While developing the subjective life, I should perfect my religious construction as much as I consolidate my own happiness. This is due to the complete bond thou alone dost establish between them, and this would suffice to justify our intimate motto :

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

Founder of the Religion of Humanity

10 rue Monsieur le Prince

*La pierre du cercueil est ton premier autel†
Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te !‡*

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

† Thy Tombstone is thy first altar. (Elisa Mercœur).

‡ May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee. (Thomas à Kempis *Imitation of Christ*. Book III, Chapter 5).

My Tenth Saint Clotilde

THY NORMAL FESTIVAL

*Virgine Marie, figlia del tuo figlio.**
Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te !†

Begun on 8 Gutenberg, 66 ; continued on the morrow, and completed the day after ; to be read at the Holy Tomb on Wednesday, 30th August

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY]

Paris, Sunday, 8 Gutenberg, 66
(20 August, 1854)

NOBLE AND TENDER PATRONESS

The duty‡ which last year compelled me to postpone our annual celebration§ for three months, again imposes a similar delay. But on this occasion the postponement has not pained me, because I felt from the outset that the transposition thus occasioned was justifiable. At the close of the preceding conversation|| I noted that it coincided with our chief anniversary. A better appreciation of this correspondence decides me to make it permanent by transferring this festival to the holy day¶ which solemnised our chaste union. Henceforward then, it shall end the chief month** of our incomparable year. Having regard to the near and happy coincidence of this day with the festival of my adopted daughter†† and of my venerable mother,‡‡ the memories of my three angels concur, in conformity with thy prudent tenderness, to sanctify my own festival.§§ Although this offering should

* Virgin Mother, daughter of thy son. (Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII).

† May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee (Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, Chapter 5).

‡ The completion of the *Positive Polity*, Vol. III, in 1853, and of Vol. IV, in 1854.

§ Composition of Auguste Comte's Saint Clotilde or Annual Confession.

|| See p. 430.

¶ August 28th, 1845. This refers to the day when, in the Church of St. Paul, rue St. Antoine, Paris, Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux became sponsors for the child of her brother and sister-in-law Monsieur and Madame Marie, junior. See p. 479.

** August.

†† The day of Saint Sophie, 18th September.

‡‡ Madame Rosalie Comte. Saint Rosalie's day was 4th September.

§§ St. Augustine, 28th August.

always recall my initial celebration,* its exercise need no longer conform to the Catholic usage, when such reasons give it a better sanction.

Our conversation is, this time, dominated by the recent completion of the Religious Construction,† with which I have worthily incorporated thee. I have just revised the last proof of the final Invocation,‡ which completes and consolidates the initial Dedication. While accomplishing this solemn homage I reserved for myself the secret development of the unrivalled satisfaction inspired by a decisive identification. In this, as I have openly declared, consists my chief recompense. The inspirations which, during several years, have been set forth in my daily prayers, will thus receive the sanction of a public that has been irrevocably taught by me thy deep co-operation in my construction of the true religion. Our common coffin, proclaimed at the beginning of my principal treatise,§ has at its conclusion been directly asked for, so as to anticipate or to overcome any opposition.

My public gratitude was, above all, inadequately expressed as regards thy natural aptitude to inspire me with the habitual feeling that happiness and duty result from unity based on love. The daily expression of our subjective bonds has penetrated me with this conviction more deeply than abstract explanations can indicate. This holy intercourse has now acquired its true character, for it cultivates alike the three sympathetic instincts,|| more and more combined in proportion as our union is purified. I have succeeded in making their ultimate fusion felt, by applying to thee the twofold epithet which was created for the Virgin-Mother. Though objectively a contradiction, this combination always results from a subjective union, when sufficiently purified.

Since I have condensed my religious construction by making Worship systematically preponderate over Doctrine and Regimen, my private adoration of thy incomparable superiority becomes more significant and complete. Thus the entire human problem is presented as reducible to the continuous growth of the benevolent instincts, for these are the only source of true discipline, alike in

* The *Letter on Social Commemoration* of 2nd June, 1845, for Clotilde de Vaux. Saint Clotilde, 3rd June.

† *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

‡ See p. 331.

§ Auguste Comte habitually described his *Positive Philosophy* and his *Positive Polity* as being respectively his 'fundamental' and his 'principal' treatise.

|| Attachment, Veneration, Benevolence.

theory and in practice. My private life is in this way so closely bound up with my public life, that I can, in the same breath, speak to the world of my personal worship, and discourse to thee about my social elaboration. Already I have made thee appreciated sufficiently to allow of my invoking thee as the best representative of Humanity. Thou wilt soon hold this noble office towards others and not to me alone; for, choice souls are disposed to elevate thee into the universal personification of the Great Being. Having consecrated my life to realising systematic unity, I ought myself to obtain, by surmounting the prevailing anarchy, the harmony which belongs to the normal state. This combination of unity with harmony, first arose between my various cerebral functions.* It now extends itself to my bodily actions, which are more and more referred to the Great being, personified in thee.

Besides being the inward source of synthesis, the worship which I have devoted to thee also develops its outward basis by inclining me to subordinate more completely the subjective to the objective. Although our subjective union has already lasted much longer than our objective connection, I feel that this is the indispensable basis of the former, which can only be improved by bringing it into closer contact with the latter. Thus may be explained why I could not succeed in my effort to complete our family by the excellent sister† whom I mentioned to thee last year, but who, from the absence of objective intercourse, is more of a stranger to me than my spiritual father,‡ dead before I was born. My adoration of thee makes this subordination, so characteristic of Positivism, more precious and more complete, by inspiring a profound feeling of its sympathetic influence. The capability of the inward to reflect the outward is as yet adequate only as regards the material order. The harmony of the outward world, as represented by sound theories, allows the brain to foresee physical events. But as regards the human spectacle, individual or collective, the poets alone have been organs of this correspondence between the without and the within, which therefore only embraced individual facts. The social and moral laws were unknown, and so real previsions were impossible. But

* The cerebral functions according to Gall's theory of the brain, rectified and enlarged by Auguste Comte, include not only the intellectual faculties, but the moral and practical impulses. See *Positive Polity*, Vol. I, and *Positivist Catechism*.

† Virginie Chardoillet. See pp. 416, 432.

‡ Condorcet, author of the *Sketch of History*.

in the Positive state, synthesis includes alike the within and the without. Poetry and Philosophy being drawn together in Religion, man completely mirrors the world, as appears in the decisive volume* which I owe to thy inspiration.

This spontaneous preamble enables me to mingle abstract views with the annual statement of my chief events. My material situation having become sufficiently harmonious with my mission, this periodical report should, above all, concern the function which more and more governs my life, private as well as public.† Thus I am drawn nearer to the purely subjective existence, which is the final goal of our noble efforts.

When finishing the preceding conversation, I expected that I should have nothing to tell thee about its concluding month. But the second half of August, 1853, supplied me with a lasting memory, in the first visit of the eminent banker,‡ whose decided adhesion I announced to thee. This interview inspired me with such confidence in this excellent disciple that I began to acquaint him with my appreciation, long kept secret, but which I have lately published,§ of the happiness I owe to thee, notwithstanding our catastrophe.

Among the recollections of the following month, I must first place the appearance of my third volume.|| after a delay of several weeks. The admiration it excited in the best judges was completed by testimonies of others, whose competence only concerned style. I must not forget the happy day, hardly to be repeated, that I was able to spend under the trees I frequent, amidst excellent disciples of both sexes.¶ It was secretly disturbed by the beginning of the annoyance, which lasted two months, caused by the deplorable breach of the fraternal relations I imagined to have established between two of my eminent adherents. The day but one after, I was obliged to announce my distress, arising from inadequate subscriptions, this was however, nobly compensated within a few weeks, by exceptional sacrifices.

The chief recollection of October shows the powerful influence of the Positivist bond, even with those who think they have

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

† Auguste Comte here refers to his office as the first High Priest of the Religion of Humanity, his material support having been secured, at last, by a public subscription. See his eight Annual Circulars, 1850-1857, translated by Dr. Congreve.

‡ Monsieur Deullin of Epernay, named by Auguste Comte in his Will as one of the thirteen executors selected by him.

§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV. Invocation addressed to Clotilde de Vaux. The catastrophe was her death, 5th April, 1845.

|| *Positive Polity*, Vol. III, published in September, 1853.

¶ Auguste Comte occasionally made excursions to the woods in the neighbourhood of Paris, sometimes in the company of his disciples. *La Revue Occidentale*, 1 September, 1896.

severed it. In consequence of the incident concerning the subscription, I then formally announced the possibility of my reducing an undeserved yearly allowance.* This diminution, which I stated might soon be made, though I hope always to avoid it, led to a distinct recognition of my liberty to make it, though this had been denied in the previous year. Then I received the humble appeal of a clever writer† who could not bear the rupture, which had proceeded from him, while I deemed its continuance preferable to equivocal relations, soon perhaps to cease. A happier return, in which gratitude had a share, soon occurred in a German Positivist,‡ whom revolutionary influences had withdrawn from a connection he will always regret. Although his convictions have not become sufficiently practical, I recognised the sincerity of his adhesion to religious Positivism, which he had long rejected. To this month I owe the interesting visit of a new proselyte. His conversion seems to be complete as regards his heart, and he furnished an unquestionable testimony which decided my special judgment on the fraternal conflict.

November leaves me no other recollection but that of personal acquaintance with the disciple who, as I recently believed, I had acquired in my native department.§ Thus the hopes, which arose out of a misleading correspondence, began to fade, and soon disappeared. I remain, therefore, without any decisive adhesion in the place of my birth, for which, perhaps, my city|| is as much to blame as my family. But this disappointment has in no way altered my natural disposition, systematised by my last volume,¶ always to form, at the outset, the most favourable view, as regards both persons and things. Only I feel bound to suspend any judgment based on correspondence, until verified by personal intercourse.

In December, my chief recollection concerns the exceptional publication by which a truly eminent woman** has decisively promoted the worthy propaganda of Positivism, especially in British surroundings. This great work, in which our noble colleague has fully accepted the office of an interpreter, shows more

* The allowance by Auguste Comte to Madame Comte.

† Monsieur Littré.

‡ Perhaps M. de Ribbentrop (*Uma Vizita*, 296).

§ See p. 429.

|| Montpellier, where Auguste Comte was born, 19th January, 1798.

¶ See the first law of the First Philosophy, *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, pp. 154-165, also *Positive Catechism*, p. 200.

** Miss Harriet Martineau. See p. 430.

clearly the hollowness of the self-styled judge who endeavoured to forestall such a work by an ephemeral book.* The year ended with the decisive realisation of the normal minimum for the Sacerdotal Subscription,† which will henceforward probably suffice without having to resort again to exceptional efforts.

January, 1854, opened with a noteworthy advance in the solemnity, which for several years past‡ has gradually tended towards the celebration of the Great Being by honouring the Founder of the true Religion. Besides a more numerous and more respectful audience, its religious nature was manifested by the wish to combine both sexes. Feminine participation will sanctify a reunion which originally offered only masculine conversation, cordial rather than venerating. Thus this celebration will soon acquire its normal character, by being addressed to thee as much as to me. This month gave me the precious reply of our eminent auxiliary§ to the expression of my gratitude due to her noble co-operation. In it she expressed her admirable determination that I should share in the profits of her work. Some days afterwards I was able in my fifth circular, publicly to honour this generous proposal, which I could not then accept.||

February was specially characterised by the first chapter of my last volume,¶ each of the others occupying one of the following months, with two more weeks for the last chapter. Then began the irrevocable elaboration of my utopia of the Virgin-Mother,** which is destined to become for select, at least for feminine souls, the synthetic compendium of Positivism, as the Eucharistic mystery is for Catholicism. At the end of this month arose my determination, supremely important, which completed the systematic institution of the true religion, by placing the worship before the doctrine; to the same period I refer the spontaneous return, probably final though always inadequate, of the eminent artist,†† of whom revolutionary fluctuations had before deprived us. This un hoped-for movement marks the

* This refers to Auguste Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences, an exposition of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, by George Henry Lewes, 1853. See *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à H. D. Hutton*, Nos. 2, 3, and 5, in the *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Divers*, Vol. I, part I.

† 7,000 francs. See the Annual Circular of Auguste Comte for 1854.

‡ See pp. 383, 397.

§ Miss Harriet Martineau.

|| Auguste Comte's reason for at first declining Miss Martineau's offer was his decision not to profit by the sale of his works. But see p. 440-1.

¶ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

** See p. 421.

†† Monsieur Etex. See pp. 418, 427.

natural beginning of the resolve to which I owe the precious images* which now adorn our home.

March was distinguished by the decisive execution of the happy transposition,† of which I had just formed the project, as to the worship. This was so completely normal that, after some days, it became as familiar to me as if I had never proceeded otherwise. Then realising this change I felt how characteristic it was of Positive Religion, the worship being thus improved, without in any way injuring the doctrine. This impulse immediately suggested to me the exceptional publication which, in ten years, will close my career as a writer, with the holy correspondence, preceded by our biographies, and followed by a poem, sketching my second life. The same month supplied me with memory from abroad in the admirable letter of the noble enthusiast,‡ whose conversion is mainly due to thee, and who contemplates his early establishment of a settled home in Protestant America.

April began with a touching coincidence. The general revision of my tenderest chapter§ corresponded with the annual commemoration of our catastrophe. This accord was so complete that at the fatal moment I was reading the passage which recommends a familiar contemplation of the scenes of death.|| Thus was I preserved from shedding tears, as I had done on all previous anniversaries. I then owed to thee the inspiration, recently carried out, as regards my last intentions, and thou hast especially dissuaded me from the reduction,¶ little worthy of me. A noble publicity will naturally terminate all unwise anxiety, and will guarantee the support of the adopted daughter whom thou didst treat as worthy to be thy sister. Some days after this resolve an eminent disciple,** following an honourable example,†† overcame the material difficulty which, owing to circumstances, delayed the printing of my last volume.‡‡ My noble colleague§§ soon modified her generous proposal to share her profits with me. I was

* These included three works by M. Etex, viz., the picture of Auguste Comte and his three Angels, his Mother, Clotilde de Vaux, and his adopted daughter, Sophie Thomas; the portrait of Clotilde de Vaux; and the marble bust of Auguste Comte.

† The worship being placed before the doctrine in the 4th Vol. of the *Polity*.

‡ Mr. Henry Edger, who lived for some years in Long Island, State of New York, but ultimately settled and died in Paris. See Auguste Comte's letters to Mr. Edger, also to Mr. Metcalfe—*Lettres d'A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 2.

§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, Chapter 2, on Worship.

|| *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, p. 105.

¶ This refers to the annuity which Auguste Comte granted to Madame Comte.

** Dr. Audiffrent. See p. 482.

†† Monsieur Joseph Lonchamp, who guaranteed the expenses of printing the first volume of the *Positive Polity*.

‡‡ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

§§ Miss Harriet Martineau.

thus able to accept it, without foregoing my just self-denial, by devoting my portion to pay the expenses of printing. The same month recalls to my mind the elaboration which carried out my decision to place Worship before Doctrine. Thus I improved the Doctrine, by an unexpected improvement of my encyclopedic principle, sympathy being recognised as the true source of synthesis.

During the following month* occurred the exclusion,† better supported than I expected, of the so-called disciple from my department,‡ whom, not being aware of his Protestant origin, I had too easily admitted into a fraternal association. Thus, I was led to take, henceforward, special precautions in order to avoid any undeserved admission to the religious family§ in which normal habits are being worked out. Some days later, the central group of Positivists in Paris deplored the departure of the incomparable household,|| which, for the last two years, so efficaciously helped our propaganda. This excellent couple first migrated to a distance, but now reside near the human metropolis, where their natural influence will often be utilised. The same month manifested the completeness of my chief Irish disciple's¶ convictions by the spontaneous respect his best letter shows to 'the noble lady** whose memory all true Positivists cherish and venerate.' Towards the end of May, the elaboration of the regimen†† allowed of my doing honour to the decisive effort by which our excellent banker‡‡ had just satisfied me of his practical ability. Thus began the series of manifestations by which my concluding volume prepares the normal advent of each of the triumvirs§§ whom I have privately chosen to carry out the chief phase of the organic transition. §§

The commencement of June would have made me feel painfully the forced postponement of our annual conversation, had

* May, 1854.

† From the Positivist Society, founded by Auguste Comte in 1848.

‡ Hérault.

§ The Positivist Society.

|| That of Dr. and Madame Robinet.

¶ Henry Dix Hutton.

** Clotilde de Vaux. See *Lettres d' A. Comte à Henry Dix Hutton*, Nos. 10 and 35—also Dr. Ingram's passages from the letters of A. Comte, pp. 45, 46, and the [note, p. 46.

†† *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, Chapter 4.

‡‡ Monsieur Deullin, banker at Epernay, and one of the thirteen executors named in Auguste Comte's Will.

§§ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, Chapter 5.

I not already decided on its final transposition. Thus I can only connect this date with the installing of our picture* on the very day when our worship celebrates two noble women.† This decisive presentation was soon followed by thy special image, all the more precious because the sketch by thy mother, now faithfully reproduced, has, by some strange carelessness, been irreparably injured. Although eight years of purely subjective representations made me independent of such help, yet it will give precision to my recollections, and, above all, will afford greater satisfaction to the reasonable requirements of my disciples. I had only just received it when thou didst thus become known to the eminent Positivist‡ who had my portrait painted in Holland.

My recollections of July especially concern the fitting termination of the volume which completes and resumes my religious construction. It ends with the exceptional Invocation that proves and confirms thy essential co-operation in the entire work which characterises my second life. All the aspirations of my private worship have thus obtained the publicity which, in due time, will guarantee their realisation. This month also reminds me of the happy resolve which completes my domestic service by more entirely safeguarding my auxiliary household, on the anniversary of the birth of the dear child§ who was born during my celebration of the first Positivist marriage. Thus having systematised domestic life, I could immediately make a personal application of the general principle, so far as my situation and surroundings would allow. July also brought the unexpected arrival of the eminent disciple,|| who, though he cannot, as I had too strongly hoped, ever become my successor, yet deserves my particular and constant care. As he is now settled here, I can judge him irrevocably, and perhaps dispel impressions resulting from a hostile accusation, in which his brethren begin to see their error.¶

During the present month** I must first apprise thee of the secret list of the thirteen executors whom I intend to select. Various impressions make me feel how important it is that I should not

* Auguste Comte and his three angels by Etex.

† Heloise and Beatrice. Historical Calendar of Positivism, 19th of St. Paul (8th of June).

‡ Probably Monsieur de Capellen.

§ Paul Thomas.

|| Monsieur Lafitte.

¶ The Executors named in Auguste Comte's Will added a rectifying note as follows :

'M. Comte has himself acknowledged having been led into error as regards his understanding of the circumstances here referred to, and in a letter written to this disciple he altered his judgment. See p. 561 Testament (French).

** August, 1854.

divulge the list until I can feel certain that those honoured by such a function are devoted to me and disposed to feel proud of it. This month offers me from abroad a lasting recollection in the precious visit of two excellent representatives of the Irish group.*

At the end of this annual narrative I feel relieved of the involuntary disturbance which I experienced after having completed my great construction. Until this delightful report† was rendered, I could not feel sufficiently relieved from the duty which compelled a postponement, for I am not yet accustomed to see it as a transposition, however normal it be. Henceforward, my works, whether written or oral, will be completed before this celebration, for this, if placed three months earlier, would, unless by a happy exception, have made it clash with them.

Thus I, unreservedly yielding to the impressions due to the worthy completion of an incomparable function, begin to feel the general reaction which will, more and more, characterise the remainder of my second life. Hitherto, the regeneration which I owe to thee emanated chiefly from my private existence, whence proceeded the better perfecting of my public mission, my only resource against the deep bitterness of my previous situation. But, owing to the philosophic results of thy holy influence, my social life will henceforth consolidate and develop my personal happiness. This reciprocal action—as the natural result of the normal harmony of the twofold aspect, public and private, of my existence, has already made itself felt in the course of the present conversation. When familiarised, it will facilitate and complete for me the growth of true unity, which being always relative, allows, or rather requires, continual progress.

So impelled, my feelings and works will become more and more affiliated, to an extent which even now surpasses the hopes raised by our earliest conversations, written or oral. Already has this one inspired the happy modification which this morning I have, in good time no doubt, introduced into the fundamental formula of our religion.‡ I now combine the second term with the first, separating the last, and this should henceforward fit it more completely for its normal destination. So long

* Dr. G. J. Allman and Mr. H. D. Hutton. See *Correspondence inédite d' A. Comte*, Vol. II, pp. 175, 179, 181, 182, 186.

† Auguste Comte's Tenth Saint Clotilde.

‡ Originally this formula stood: Love the principle, Order the basis, and Progress the aim. As altered it stands: Love the principle and Order the basis; Progress the aim.

as I had to overcome the revolt of the intellect against the heart, and the sundering of progress from order, the original form continued to be preferable. But, now that my new volume* has adequately met these conditions, the new form will make more deeply felt the religious constitution of Positivism, which allies love with faith in order to guide conduct. Unity, being represented as the result of inward sympathy combined with outward order, allows of the regulation of our entire existence, even in its physical aspect, by a destination which is always altruistic. Thus I shall live more completely for Humanity, directly in my public career, indirectly by serving this family whose centre thou art, which for me takes the place of country, thus, more and more, realising our intimate maxim :

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

Founder of the Universal Religion

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

La pierre du cercueil est ton premier autel.†

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

† Thy tombstone is thy first altar. (Elisa Mercœur).

My Eleventh Saint Clotilde

THY EXCEPTIONAL CELEBRATION

*Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda
Che basti a render voi grazia per grazia.**

Begun on 7 Gutenberg 67 ; continued on the morrow and finished the day after ;
to be read at the holy Tomb on Wednesday, 29th August

[REVISED AND IMPROVED COPY]

Paris, Sunday, 7 Gutenberg, 67
(19 August, 1855)

NOBLE AND TENDER PATRONESS

My last utterance† ended by showing that I began to feel that complete unity which, consequent on the achievement of my religious construction, should evermore characterise the remainder of my second life. Under thy holy influence this new career has become essentially different from the earlier, since, at its outset, my private existence gave birth to the chief amelioration of my public mission. Henceforward this renovation will be completed by an inverse reaction. My mission, constantly growing, has at last led me to regulate every part of human existence. Thus I ought to verify and avail myself of this capability by systematically regulating my own life. Thy angelic impulse will be deeply characterised by this new action, in which my work exerts on my affections an equivalent influence to that which it received from them.

Since order and progress have been finally reduced by me to establishing and developing unity founded on love, I should thus supply the first example of a truly religious life, by completely

* Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto IV.—
*Affection fails me to requite thy grace
With equal sum of gratitude.*

(Cary's translation).

† Auguste Comte's Tenth Saint Clotilde.

harmonising my own existence. This will form the merit or happiness of my second life, of which the foundations, public and private were laid, during the last ten years, by thy holy influence. Our religion has definitively instituted the inward life, admirably initiated during the Middle Ages, but increasingly neglected during the entire course of the Western Revolution*. The founder of Positivism ought to prove that his construction is real and opportune by its decisive application to his own conduct. My complete unity, as the result and reward of my efforts, should particularly indicate the general efficacy of the religion, which, unifying the within by love, and binding it to the without by faith, entirely precludes the arbitrary. As far as possible I have reduced the discipline of human nature to the constant culture, direct and indirect, of the sympathetic instincts, as the sources of duty, of happiness and even of health. This doctrine should be illustrated and confirmed by my own existence, the completest harmony yet realised being associated with thee, as personifying Humanity.

Henceforward the direct and constant growth of such unity should fortify and develop my second life, in its private and public aspects. The latter will definitively construct the universal synthesis, of which I have now established the bases, intellectual and moral. In the former, I should directly cultivate subjective existence, which has been sufficiently subordinated by me to objective reality, mainly considered as its needful foundation. However long I may live, this twofold goal, pursued in different ways, will supply me, outwardly and inwardly, with inexhaustible employment, eminently fitted to give my existence greater efficacy and higher dignity.

Thus will be gradually prepared the ultimate eternity when, fully incorporated with the Great Being, we shall live only in posterity, ceaselessly developing the supreme destiny.

My existence, having become above all an inward life, is more and more concentrated, and less and less varied. Thus, in my annual outpourings, I am led to describe for thee my emotions, rather than the events that concern me. Their chief attraction

* Auguste Comte employs the term Revolution in a large sense beyond violent political commotion. According to his *Philosophy of History* it commenced with the 14th Century, when the Catholic-Feudal civilisation sensibly declined, and embraced the four succeeding centuries (15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th). These were marked by the disruption of the older social organisation and the growth of the elements (especially science and industry), which prepared the ultimate ascendancy of Positivism in church and state.

for me would thus be lost if these conversations were intended to be made public. But by confining them to ourselves they should be more interesting for us, perpetuating, as they do, impressions which could not otherwise be preserved.

These reflections are directly connected with the exceptional anniversary which has naturally suggested them. This is the first year since my moral regeneration began through thy influence, that I am able fully to appreciate it. Not only have the chief results due to thee been realised, but I am no longer absorbed by a great work.* This freedom from engagements, previously unattainable, will cease next year, thus specially characterising the present year. In conformity with the general plan of my labours† the like rest from written composition should occur again in two years,‡ but its chief influence, active and passive, belongs to the present year. This is a preparation for my dignified retirement,§ which should begin in 1865, after the completion of my essential publication, comprising our holy Correspondence, preceded by the noble Biographies,|| and possibly followed by the poetic sketch.¶ Having then ceased to write for publication, the activity I should always maintain for preaching, counsel and consecration, can no longer admit of the concentration, hitherto imposed on our life. Our annual conversations will then, generally speaking, assume the character which is exceptionally presented by this one.

It was my duty at the outset to explain this situation, now exceptional, but normal for the future time, not distant and already anticipated. Having done so, I shall, following the usual

* This year, 1855, intervened between the completion of the *Positive Polity* (1854) and the publication of the first volume of the *Subjective Synthesis* (Philosophy of Mathematics or Logic, 1856). It was a year of resting and preparation.

† This had been indicated by Auguste Comte in the sixth and concluding volume of his *Positive Philosophy*, 1847. It consisted of four works on Sociology, Mathematics, Education (in theory and practice), and Industry. He only lived to produce two treatises, viz., the *Positive Polity* and the first volume of the *Synthesis*. He died in 1857, the year devoted to his meditation on Morals, theoretical and practical. The only portions of the latter published consist of some important conceptions contained in the *Positive Polity* (Vol. IV, Chapter 3, on Doctrine), and the programme written by Auguste Comte for the Morals (theoretical and practical). These last will be found in the *Positive Tables* compiled by Dr. Congreve.

‡ The year 1857. Auguste Comte, after an illness of several weeks, died 5th September, 1857.

§ 'Retirement' here means the cessation of elaborate written compositions. Auguste Comte, had he lived, being then 67, would have then devoted himself to exercising his function as the first High Priest of the Religion of Humanity, and developing the Church of Humanity, which he had founded and made a reality even before his premature death.

The biographies by Auguste Comte of himself and Clotilde de Vaux.

¶ Auguste Comte's project of sketching a poem on the History of Humanity is mentioned by him. See the Invocation of Vol. IV of his *Positive Polity*, p. 331.

course, directly continue the narrative, rather emotional than concerning facts, which our last conversation carried on till the end of August, 1854.

In September, the publication of the last volume* of my religious construction naturally suggested the earliest germs of the preceding reflections. But as might be expected, they were at first governed by the feeling of rest, which was needful after an elaboration which absorbed my thoughts during seven years.† This calm, so well deserved, was then fatally disturbed by those material anxieties which until then had been disregarded owing to my mental concentration. Henceforward‡ I began to feel the tribulations which naturally accompanied my mission. More fortunate than our predecessors, we can nobly promote human regeneration, fearing nothing for our life or even for our liberty. Henceforward material oppression only affects the means of subsistence. But these persecutions, though less serious, are more continuous. They demand deeper and more constant resignation. Reformers must maintain their zeal, without relying on enthusiasm in their proselytes.

October soon relieved for the time being my anxieties arising from the inadequacy of the Positivist subscriptions. As in the preceding year, a just appeal quickly prompted noble efforts, though a repetition of the same difficulties may soon be expected. The leisure lately gained already made me feel that external diversions are unsatisfying, and how needful it is to discipline my own existence by giving the first place to my inward life, which is mainly centred in thee. From this time I became aware of the bodily ailments which habitually render precarious§ the life of the eminent colleague whose co-operation we had irrevocably obtained last year. Her condition, increasingly serious, explains for me her regrettable silence as to my religious construction,|| all the volumes of which are before her, though she

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

† The actual composition of the entire work is here stated by Auguste Comte to have occupied seven years (1847-1854). As appears from his letters to J. S. Mill, Auguste Comte had made preparation for his new work of construction soon after the completion of the *Positive Philosophy* (1842). But its actual conception and composition were not settled till after the death of Clotilde de Vaux (5th April, 1846). Both were deeply indebted to her influence, especially her subjective influence during the years (1846-1854) after her death.

‡ After 1854.

§ Miss Harriet Martineau. She was much troubled with an internal complaint but survived Auguste Comte several years. She never fully appreciated his religious construction.

|| *Positive Polity*, 4 volumes, 1851-54.

has not been able to examine them. In the previous month she had begun by an actual remittance to realise her noble resolve to share the profits of her admirable translation. Although this contribution has not yet been repeated, I cannot doubt that her generous intention is sincere and will continue, even supposing any further preoccupations should hinder its further realisation.*

In November my earliest satisfaction consisted in executing the project I had entertained since the beginning of 1854, to make a selection of Spanish dramas,† edited by one of my best disciples. By designating my philosophy as sympathetic, in the copy of that work presented to me, he first showed an appreciation of our fundamental term, soon confirmed by the strange criticism which treats me as a mystic. Towards the middle of this month the family of my principal disciple‡ confided to me the touching office of gently breaking to him the catastrophe which prematurely deprives him of an excellent mother, whose worth I had one opportunity of personally appreciating.§ From the end of November I enjoyed sufficient leisure to work out my plans of the exceptional essay which I have lately composed.|| Then also I directly elaborated the final incorporation of Fetichism with Positivism. Disliking to leave home without a special motive, though rarely doing so, I felt the need of connecting all my habitual excursions with thee. Thus I instituted for Saturday the pilgrimage which, completing my Wednesday visit,¶ perpetuates the memory of our two weekly meetings.

At the beginning of December occurred the trial of faith, painful at first but afterwards salutary, which arose out of the temporary deviation of the disciple, who apparently was most deeply pledged, especially on its moral side, to the Positive Religion. The divisions of opinion raised by my concluding volume,** chiefly with reference to the decisive Utopia†† in which

* Towards the end of 1856 a second remittance was sent to Auguste Comte out of the profits of the sale of Miss Martineau's condensed translation of the *Philosophie Positive*. See *Lettres d' A. Comte à Henry Dix Hutton*, No. xxix, dated 17 Descartes 68, published in *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*. Tome I, part I.

† The title of this selection entirely made by Auguste Comte was *Teatro Español Escogido*. It was edited by Don José S. Flores. Señor Flores also wrote of Auguste Comte as 'the sympathetic philosopher' in an article of *El Eco Hispano-Americano*, a periodical founded by him, which, published in Paris for several years, circulated in the republics of South America.

‡ Monsieur Laffitte.

§ See as to the special visit made to Auguste Comte at his home by M. Laffitte's Mother. *Comte: The Man and the Founder*, by H. D. Hutton, second edition.

|| *Appel aux Conservateurs*.

¶ Auguste Comte's weekly visit to the tomb of Clotilde de Vaux.

** *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, Chapter 3.

†† The Utopia of the Virgin Mother.

Positivism will find its condensed expression, seemed to indicate a defection which would have grieved me more deeply than any other. But the prompt and complete repentance of this noble disciple put an end to my anxiety, and this trial of faith in the end confirmed his belief, and even strengthened that of the excellent witnesses of such an example. It was generally supposed that my most decisive volume* would excite greater resistance in the young, only just emancipated from revolutionary habits. Towards the middle of this month another of my chief disciples† commenced a worthy future by his noble and energetic adoption of the profession which is most suitable for the majority of existing Positivists. His decision soon led him to propose for my consideration questions, happily conceived, from which there sprang the earliest sketch of my important conceptions on the sympathetic theory of diseases.‡ In this month I completed the pilgrimage I had instituted for each Saturday by a holy station§ in the dear chapel where we were spiritually united.||

The present year reproduced more decisively the spontaneous solemnity¶ in which Positivists, by together paying their respects to the Founder of the true Religion, tend towards the direct worship of the Great Being. But the diminished number present, and especially the absence of the sex whose co-operation I had prematurely hoped for,** gave me a sad impression of the slow advance of Positivism, and the exceptional scattering of the central group.

Early in January arose an ignoble attack, the first of many foreseen by me, due to the animosities of metaphysicians, naturally aroused by the final constitution of Positivism,†† while it was

* *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, which was specially devoted to constructing the Religion of Humanity, its Worship, Doctrine, and Régime, as well as explaining the methods adapted to the transitional policy.

† Dr. Edouard Foley was originally an officer in the French navy, but became doctor of medicine. See Auguste Comte's letters to him, *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 2.

‡ This, had our Master lived to write his treatise on Morals, would have entered into the third chapter of the theoretical portion (Vol. I) of that work. Theory of life (existence, health, disease). See Auguste Comte's Plan (found after his death) of Morals (theory and practice), Positivist tables, edited by Dr. Congreve. See also the special letters of Auguste Comte to Dr. Audiffrent on the theory of disease (*Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 1), some of which were selected and printed in Dr. Robinet's Notice.

§ This term means a pious visit to particular places in Catholic churches.

|| A chapel of the Church of St. Paul, rue St. Antoine, Paris. See p. 478.

¶ New Year's Day.

** See p. 439.

†† This refers specially to the concluding volume of the *Positive Polity*, published in 1854.

treated with respectful silence by Catholics. In my latest Circular,* I could already feel the holy efficacy of my recent institution for Saturday.† This, by inspiring me with a more conciliatory disposition towards Catholicism suggested the project which I have recently announced,‡ of a religious alliance. Having now fully constituted the Positive Religion, I no longer dread to compromise principles, irrevocably established, by making concessions and accommodations adapted to assist our progress. In addition to the social efficacy of this proceeding, it fortifies my moral improvement, by discarding feelings of repulsion, even when legitimate. Thus arose dispositions towards my old father, and even my unhappy sister, which have gradually led to the happy reconciliation I have lately effected.§

February supplied me with an unforeseen opportunity of realising in a decisive case the precious tendency, without which unity based on union can neither arise nor last. Then first I learned, from a change made in the holy tomb, thy reunion with the only parent really worthy of thee. Thenceforward I assigned to him an accessory place in my daily worship of thee, limiting this to my three memories of thy energetic father,|| which proved his noble conviction that our intercourse was pure, and that in spite of his own deviations, and the insinuations often addressed to him. On your common tomb I promised both of you,¶ in my name as in thine, my full pardon of your brother, if he ever manifests true sorrow for his conduct to us. Some information recently received allows me to hope for his return to better feelings. But this can be clearly proved only by restoring to me the holy manuscript.** Of its preservation at least, I have unexpectedly heard, as well as of that of the original portrait of thyself.††

March reproduced the mournful anniversary of thy fatal illness, but with exceptional bitterness, which can easily be explained. Since our catastrophe until now, this time of year had always found me occupied by some absorbing work. With

* The Annual Circular issued early in each year by Auguste Comte, this being the sixth of the eight which he lived to write.

† Auguste Comte's visit each week to the Church of St. Paul. See p. 478.

‡ See *Appeal to Conservatives*.

§ See Auguste Comte's last letter to his Father. *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I.

|| Monsieur Marie. For one of these reminiscences, see p. 425. The other two are probably when Monsieur Marie ordered the delivery to Auguste Comte of the M.S. bequeathed to him by Clotilde de Vaux, the other a visit to Auguste Comte by Monsieur Marie. See pp. 322 and 344.

¶ Clotilde and her father.

** Clotilde de Vaux's unfinished MS. of *Wilhelmine*.

†† The portrait of Clotilde de Vaux by her mother.

the completion of my principal construction,* I could not but feel more deeply the return of this season, yet its impressions will never again be so painful even in future seasons of rest. This sorrowful emotion could not be diminished by my decisive re-perusal of that Treatise,† the entire of which was composed under thy inspiring influence, not only as to its conceptions, but its execution. In the end this exceptional increase in the pain of our anniversary has produced a durable advantage. My complete freedom from other cares has given me a fuller appreciation of thy influence in every way, and has even developed this. So I vivified my images of thee, and imparted fresh sacredness to our bonds.

These new impressions naturally reached their highest intensity at the beginning of April. Then, as complementary to our nine anniversaries, I definitively organised the fatal period of eleven days,‡ which characterise the last act of our annual drama. In the course of my exceptional reading,§ the Invocation coincided with the hour of our catastrophe. My habitual resignation could not prevent me from feeling, with fresh bitterness, how sad was thy destiny. Instead of thy eternal youth, thou, if now surviving, wouldst complete thy fortieth year, when the normal preparation of superior women terminates. The Universal Religion, finally constructed, would have offered to thee a vast field for nobly propagating it with the sex best fitted to make it prevail. Thy previous writings|| would naturally have laid the basis of thy merited celebrity, which should assure the direct efficacy of thy chief mission. These reflections unavoidably gave me a deep feeling how grievously Humanity suffered by thy early death, for thy decisive evolution only awaited the completion of my synthesis.

Soon reverting to my usual resigned acceptance of a painful fatality, at the beginning of May thy annual new birth¶ inspired me with a more complete feeling of the benefits conferred by thee.

* *Positive Polity* 1851-54.

† *Positive Polity*.

‡ These seem to have been from Friday, 28th March, to Tuesday, 7th April (both inclusive). Senhor Mendes, of Rio de Janeiro, has given valuable information on this and other matters in his *O ano sem par and Uma Visita aos lugares santos do Positivismo*. Inquirers may also consult with advantage Mr. Albert Crompton's little book, *Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux*, 1907.

§ Auguste Comte's re-perusal of his *Positive Polity*, Vol. I-IV, the Invocation concluding Vol. IV.

|| *Lucie* and the *Pensées d'une fleur*. *Positive Polity*, Vol. I.

¶ See the Correspondence, p. 5, the first letter from Clotilde de Vaux, being dated 1 May.

From 1848* I instituted the era† for the final transition. Last year the concluding volume of my religious construction added the normal era,‡ of which the decisive advent is marked by the present year. Besides these two public chronologies I have thenceforward established the private era which marks the beginning of my second life. The eleventh year of this began on the 16th of May, 1855, being the holy anniversary of the incomparable interview§ which, ten years previously, initiated my regeneration. This month of renewal, in which I annually begin reading over again the noble correspondence, the publication of which I have arranged,|| was sadly ended by the unexpected accomplishment of a funereal function.¶ The death of the noble disciple, whom we lost in the middle of his thirtieth year, led me to regulate the solemn commemoration** I owe to all true believers, but which before this occasion it had been found impossible suitably to arrange. The moral efficacy of Positivism was decisively shown by a touching assemblage, under thy sweet image, in which both sexes united, more than in any previous case. Although a fanatical family met my courteous invitation by a flat refusal, their conduct brought out more clearly the feminine sympathies of women whose Catholic prejudices gave way to the Religion of Humanity.

On the first Sunday of June I began the exceptional essay,†† my only public utterance during my year of rest, since I was not permitted to deliver the lectures‡‡ I had announced. The seven weeks of this episodal composition have constantly shown the unexpected improvement of my self-discipline, each stage of work having for the first time in my life realised precisely what I had projected. I hope to be able to utilise still more this new power of self-command in the great and difficult composition which will occupy my next year.§§ This incident has confirmed the general

* The Positivist Historical Calendar then published.

† The years counting from the close of 1788 and the beginning of 1789.

‡ The normal era of the Religion of Humanity so instituted begins with the end of 1854 and the beginning of 1855.

§ See p. 369.

|| p. 447.

¶ See *Synthèse Subjective*, Tome I, Preface, and Letters of Auguste Comte to Charles Jundzill, *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 2.

** This rule of the Positivist Church, as established by Auguste Comte, imposed a commemoration service for the defunct on the third Sunday after the interment of the remains.

†† *Appeal to Conservatives*, 1855.

‡‡ Lectures on the History of Humanity. See the programme of this course at the end of the preface to the *Appeal to Conservatives*.

§§ The first volume of the *Synthèse Subjective*, which embraced general conceptions of the entire body of mathematical science from Arithmetic to Rational Mechanics.

plan of my working week, the five consecutive days of which were then reduced to three. This reduction, though well adapted to episodical essays, gave me a painful feeling that my mind was not sufficiently active. My leaving the house on Saturday,* being thus continued during my work, I felt more deeply the value of my custom, already familiar, which ends my visit to all our localities by specially reminding me of the historical filiation that traces Positivism back to Catholicism. With my episodical work, I must also connect an honourable feeling of the active resignation which allowed me to begin it when weighed down by my financial embarrassments, and to complete it before these had been dispelled. My Circular† had just intimated these material difficulties, when pointing out the decisive weeding out which my concluding volume‡ would effect among adherents who, before its publication, were provisional only, as they could not then judge the whole of my doctrine.

In accord with my increasing friendliness towards my father and sister, July led me to the noble initiative which, having been cordially received by both, has re-established good relations, long interrupted but henceforward unchangeable. Besides the personal value of this result, I was soon able to point it out to my disciples as a decisive proof that my private daily worship, which alone inspired the action, exerts a moral influence on life. In my picture of the great family group which now concludes my chief prayer,§ I had for several months gradually effected a subjective reconciliation, which led to its objective realisation. This reconciliation leaves me no reason for regret, except that, owing to my difficult circumstances, I cannot complete it soon by a cordial visit.|| For this I could only substitute the presentation of my bust.

Towards the end of the same month¶ a noble letter from the founder of our American group** informed me that he had completely converted to Positivism an admirable working-man,†† a presage of early success among the true descendants of the men who fought for Cromwell. A worthy request, which I

* Auguste Comte's second weekly visit to the tomb of Clotilde de Vaux. See p. 449.

† The sixth of Auguste Comte's Annual Circulars, 1855.

‡ *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV.

§ The morning prayer said by Auguste Comte after rising for the day.

|| See the letter of Auguste Comte to his father dated 28th January, 1857. *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, part 2, p. 375.

¶ July, 1855.

** Mr. Henry Edger, then residing in Long Island, State of New York.

†† Mr. John Metcalf. See Auguste Comte's correspondence with Mr. Edger and Mr. Metcalf. *Lettres d' A. Comte à divers*, Tome I, Part 2.

accepted with delight, characterises the religious completeness of these two eminent disciples. They ask permission to represent me in conferring the first Positivist Sacrament* on the young child, spontaneously named Sophie Clotilde.† This example, arisen amidst the most anarchical of populations, indicates the superiority of conversions prompted by the heart, showing that there are Protestants or sceptics who are disposed to feel the affinity between Positivism and Catholicism.

At the beginning of August, I properly informed the person‡ whom at one time I had contemplated as my successor, that, in consequence of his conduct while under my view, he had forfeited this honourable prospect, and had little chance of a theoretical vocation. The society of free-thinkers, who have recently risen against Anglicanism, have, by a special deputation, nobly requested my authority, readily granted, to publish the letter§ in which, the previous year, I had, in a paternal spirit, censured their negative attitude. Some weeks later this valuable contact led to my decisive interview with the chief|| of this Society, who seems really disposed to accept my guidance, and assume an organic aim. If he carries out suitably his proposal to publish an English translation of my *Philosophy of History*,¶ this will overcome the conspiracy of British literateurs who invoke intellectual against social Positivism. During this month my principal disciple** took his yearly departure, painfully felt on both sides owing to the melancholy situation irrevocably created by the great loss†† he suffered last November. This transformation has particularly developed attachment and veneration in my young friend, whose moral culture will duly complete the intellectual superiority, which is admitted by all true believers. Although my appeal, consequent on the insufficiency of subscriptions, showed how lukewarm are most Positivists, some few have nobly evinced their determination to guarantee me against the renewal of similar financial difficulties.

This faithful picture of the events, or rather of the impressions that followed our last conversation, naturally closes my year

* Presentation, which corresponds to Baptism.

† A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edger (both converts to Positivism), and now the wife of Dr. Edward Nicholson.

‡ Monsieur Lefort.

§ Inquiries have been made for this letter, but without success.

|| Mr. George Jacob Holyoake.

¶ *Positive Polity*, Vol. III.

** Monsieur Pierre Laffitte.

†† The death of his mother. See p. 449.

of rest. Although my exceptional essay* cannot be published till the beginning of September, its completion delivers me of the supplement needed for the great construction which I finished a year ago. Already are my thoughts habitually turned towards the important volume† I shall enter on five months hence, which will decisively confirm my synthetic power, the most abstract of conceptions being there regenerated by the affections. In September,‡ however, I must realise an important episode; I shall write in the name of Humanity, personified by thee, the noble Testament destined to secure the execution of my public resolves. During a year I have gradually effected the necessary prelude by selecting almost with certainty the thirteen disciples, to whom I shall confide this noble office. During the exceptional year thus set forth to thee, thy holy influence has inspired me with fresh advance towards true unity, private and public. My constant worship of thee, while developing my subjective life, naturally subordinates this to the objective order, which alone can secure the consistency and even the dignity of the former by getting rid of every arbitrary element. Thus grows the normal coincidence of the two conditions of human harmony. Of this I owe to thee both the source and the result, since the glory I procure for thee springs from the improvement thou dost confer on me. During the past ten years during which thou hast regenerated me, thy fitness to represent the Great Being for me is incontestable, in a continuous state of subjective communion more complete than the objective communion which Catholics imagine. All the emotions and reflections specially due to my brain being free for them have now given me a better understanding of the religious principle, which reduces science and art to the knowledge and improvement of human nature, socially and individually. Being deeply convinced that happiness and duty require, above all, the repression of our bad feelings, and the development of our good ones, I have, during this exceptional year, made considerable progress in both respects. Gradually freed by thee from all bitterness, and my regeneration being naturally strengthened by the constant example of thy immortal sister,§ I am only unyielding towards the unhappy woman|| who is always disposed to

* *Appeal to Conservatives.*

† The *Subjective Synthesis* which followed the *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV, 1854.

‡ Auguste Comte's Testament was not composed till November, 1856.

§ Clotilde de Vaux's sister (by adoption), Sophie Thomas.

|| Madame Comte.

take undue advantage of any concession. But in proportion as thy subjective benefits expand, I increasingly feel that our catastrophe has objectively left a blank in my public and private life. Thy chief value has thus been appreciated by myself alone. Moreover, the religious expansion of Positivism has lost thy potent help in two ways. During the seven years* required for completing the universal synthesis thy talents, nobly matured, would have created for thy sex a propaganda of the construction already effected by me for the choice souls of my own. When we should both have ceased to publish, a freer and more complete growth of consultative influence would have assigned to each of us offices, distinct but closely related. Presiding angelically over friendly meetings, always instituted by women, thou wouldst have habitually supplied the personal contacts which are now wanting for Positivists. Thy varied influence, confirming our happiness, and our authority, would have also assured our social position, by awakening generous impulses in souls at first drawn to Positivism intellectually rather than morally. In place of such a destiny thy patronage, which death has made more holy, complete and enduring, is alone left to me for developing the public and private efficacy of the regeneration I owe to thee, which always leads me to return to our sacred motto

Eternal love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

Founder of the Universal Religion

Born on 19 January, 1798, at Montpellier

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

Vergine-Madre, figlia del tuo figlio,†

Amen te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te.‡

* The years 1856-62 both inclusive. *Synthèse Subjective*, Tome I, *Logique*, 1856: Year of rest and preparation, 1857; *Synthèse*, Tome II, *Morale Théorique*, 1858; *Synthèse*, Tome III, *Morale Pratique*, 1859: Year of rest and preparation, 1860; *Industrie* (theory of, as social organisation), 1861; *Biographies of Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux*, 1862; See also p. 447. and the conclusion of *Positive Polity*, Vol. IV. Substantially these works contemplated by Auguste Comte had been announced in the *Philosophie Positive*, Tome VI.

† Virgin Mother, daughter of thy son. (Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII).

‡ May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee. (Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, Chapter 5).

My Twelfth Saint Clotilde

THY NEW INFLUENCE

*Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda
Che basti a render voi grazia per grazia.**

Begun on 6 Descartes, 68 ; continued on the morrow, and finished the day after ;
to be read at the Holy Tomb on Wednesday, 22 October.

Paris, Sunday, 6 *Descartes* 68
(12 October, 1856)

NOBLE AND TENDER-HEARTED PATRONESS

The great construction† which was normally dedicated to thee has finally obliged me to alter the date which had been naturally settled for my annual confessions. In place of thy holy festival,‡ recalling the happy opening of the series of our mutual confidences, I was thus led to choose my own festival,§ which anniversary thy wise tenderness justly chose for the noble solemnisation of our chaste union. But this second rule, which I considered definitive, after only three applications|| underwent a change which, I hope, will prevent any further alterations of date. So long as the final construction,¶ of which I have just completed the first part, remains unfinished,**I shall only be free from work during August during my years of rest. For this reason, after having rightly put aside my inclination to suspend constructive work in order to keep August for the date of my annual Confession, I must finally carry over this date to October. I hope this third date may always be maintained, even when I shall

* Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto IV.—

*Affection fails me to requite thy grace
With equal sum of gratitude.* (Cary's translation).

† *The Positive Polity*. See Dedication, Vol. I.

‡ 3rd June, day of Saint Clotilde in the Catholic Calendar.

§ That of St. Augustine in the Catholic Calendar, 28th of August. See p. 479.
for the explanation of this statement.

|| Confessions, Nos. 9, 10 and 11.

¶ *La Synthèse Subjective*.

** *Synthese*, Vol. I, Logique.

have totally ceased to publish. October will recall the decisive beginning of our normal bond, which, from that time undergoing no change, only became confirmed.

When writing my Testament, as announced to thee,* I definitively arranged the employment of these annual Confessions, none of which have hitherto been made known to any one. They shall not be published while I am alive. Only after my death shall they be added to my Testament. To this it is my immediate intention to annex my Daily Prayers (omitting superfluous details), these following our Biographies, and preceding our Correspondence. I can thus reconcile the freedom essential for these outpourings with the final judgment of an honourable public.

The permanent character of thy holy influence has naturally shown itself under a new aspect during the year,† of which I submit to thee my special report. The volume which I am about to publish, executed under the influence of a Testament which has more completely identified us, has made me feel deeply to what an extent I increased my force and influence by mingling thy being with mine. Theoricians will no longer reproach thee with deterring me from abstract speculations; and practicians will refer to thee the increase of synthetic power which was the natural effect of our strong united sympathy.

With this preamble I submit to thee the series of our events, especially of my impressions, which have occurred since the end of August, 1855, when I completed my last confession.

The following month‡ affords me three memories worthy of thy attention. Of these the first is the publication of the important essay,§ which I had just written to make known the regenerating doctrine among truly practical leaders. Though this writing has not become sufficiently familiar to this class, some isolated indications already furnish a presumption that it has silently laid the ground for valuable adhesions, which will soon be made known. In the same month took place the decisive visit, made to me by the noble head|| of our incomparable Dutch group. This personal interview, prepared by ten years of satisfactory correspondence, left an ineffaceable impression on both sides. In September

* Testament, p. 456.

† The year covered by Auguste Comte's Twelfth and last Annual Confession, 19th August, 1855, to 12th October, 1856.

‡ September, 1855.

§ *Appeal to Conservatives.*

|| Le Baron de Constant.

also began my direct relations with the young working-woman* who soon supplied the first complete type of Positivist marriage. My perusal of the inestimable correspondence which, continuing for the space of a year, had prepared this union, justifies me in hoping this marriage will prove on both sides a decisive example that our religion is efficacious for private life.

October has especially left me the memory of the first application actually realised of the preamble finally arranged for the Positivist marriage.† This institution, thus inaugurated by two excellent proletaries, was soon able to overcome the blind resistance which it first encountered from my best disciples, who were dominated by their old revolutionary habits. Their empirical objections were followed by a reflective appreciation of this principle. It is as closely bound up with Positivism as that of widowhood, to which it is the complement, but without this decisive example doubts would have long continued to exist. The same month recalls to me the interesting visit of an estimable fellow-townsmen whom I hoped to see from time to time owing to the satisfaction he had personally found in our interview. This recollection was sadly made permanent by the unexpected death of this worthy friend of my old father.

November was particularly marked by increasing pecuniary difficulties, in the midst of which I finished my exceptional year. Thus painfully weighed down, I was yet bound at the end of this month to begin my unexampled Testament, the execution of which I had gradually postponed until these difficulties should be sufficiently overcome. In spite of their persistence, I made sure that my efforts had established within myself the moral serenity essential for the due accomplishment of so solemn an act.

The composition of my Testament, which its precious reaction on my inward being induced me to prolong, occupied the greater part of December, including the time required for making two copies. During this long contemplation of death, a generous supplemental aid completely ended the pecuniary anxieties under which I expected to finish my year of rest. The happy prolongation of this work completed its moral efficacy by a dignified reference to the financial vicissitudes that accompanied its progress. The per-

* She married M. Fili, a workman.

† This refers to the betrothal of the engaged pair, which precedes the civil marriage, and is marked by a declaration of chastity in their co-habitation during the three months after the legal union and before the Positivist sacrament of marriage as the final religious ceremony.

formance of this social office has deeply modified my nature, thus giving a greater development to my unity, both private and public. It has naturally drawn me closer to thee, for it spontaneously subordinated our objective separation to our subjective community of existence. While writing the initial volume of my final construction,* I had experienced the mental and moral efficacy of the posthumous attitude this Testament has normally secured for me. The physical disturbance that followed its completion enabled me to take a truer measure of the depth of the emotions amidst which I was destined to finish my exceptional year and to prepare my complementary work.

At my usual reception† for the New Year, I gave a direct intimation of my new attitude as a definitive result of my Testament. Some days later I had already received their noble adhesion from the majority of the thirteen disciples whom I had chosen in order to create the hierarchical bond, hitherto wanting for Positivists, capable of uniting their leader with the general body of adherents. In the middle of January‡ the sweet anniversary of the collaboration to which thou didst specially invite me, enabled me to write in one day the longest and most decisive of my Annual Circulars.§ But soon after arose the unexpected revolt of my best disciples, in opposition to the attitude I took in my Testament towards the unworthy wife, who alone can prevent its provisions from being carried out.|| I was then obliged to take our Sophie into my confidence¶ as to the painful secret, I should have one day

* *Logique*, Vol. I of *Synthèse*.

† New Year, 1856.

‡ This refers to Auguste Comte's *Lettre sur le Mariage*. See p. 214, Clotilde de Vaux's request, and p. 219, Auguste Comte's performance.

§ The Seventh Circular, 1856. The eighth and last was composed and circulated by Auguste Comte early in 1857.

|| Madame Comte, on her husband's death, 5th September 1857, aided by M. Littré, did her best to frustrate the execution of the Testament. Owing to the prompt and vigorous action taken by M. P. Laffitte, designated by Auguste Comte as president of the thirteen executors and representing them (Testament, p. 472), with the generous pecuniary help of many disciples, the intentions of the Testator were to a considerable extent carried out. The apartment, 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, was secured for the executors with practically all its contents. Madame Comte destroyed Elex's picture of Auguste Comte and his three angels, with the exception of August Comte's portrait. Subsequently, Mme. Comte and her ally, M. Littré, instituted a lawsuit in Paris to break the Testament as null and void, the will of an Atheist and Lunatic, but in 1870 the Parisian court upheld the will, and declared that all Auguste Comte's literary remains should be deposited in the safe keeping of an advocate. When Mme. Comte died the executors claimed these documents and obtained them. Inventories have since been made of all the articles deposited at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince. M. Laffitte practically saved for posterity Auguste Comte's inheritance, and nobly fulfilled his duties as President of the Execution Testamentaire. These legal proceedings and the final judgment of the Court of Paris, have been printed in the *Revue Occidentale*.

¶ See as to this, Testament, Additions 2 and 4, pp. 493 and 499.

told to thee, as marking the fatal generosity, so ill-recompensed, which led to the only serious fault of my life. A special meeting* with all the executors then in Paris ended this revolt by a solemn explanation on her in whom some of them had become strangely interested. It was also necessary to complete this needful explanation by making an addition to my Testament, which will of course be published with it.

February opened by my beginning to write the volume I have now finished. This entrance upon my final construction was unexpectedly troubled by a memorable incident. One of my best disciples properly invoked my sacerdotal intervention against a serious act of oppression. I speedily ended this conflict by the cordial help of a true Positivist, but this passing disturbance brought strongly home to me that my intellectual office greatly interferes with my moral mission. Since then, however, the written composition of my longest volume has been uninterrupted. During this month I received, one by one, the deliberate adhesions before withheld from my Testament, indicating the spontaneous abandonment of the insurrection which I had specially repressed. Hitherto obliged to gain recruits in the revolutionary world, I end each of these new revolts by consolidating my authority, even after the most painful struggles.†

In March I first completed the confidential communication necessarily made to our Sophie, availing myself of the advice most properly given by one of my best disciples. By having it thus in writing, as a secret codicil to my Will, I forestall, if not get over, the calumnies which my noble adopted daughter might sometime have to bear from enemies who have already shown themselves rather unscrupulous. This statement will never be divulged to others than my executors, to enable them to defend themselves, and that only after my death. I shall destroy it if I survive her who is in fault, although its existence be well known. A few days afterwards I celebrated the first fully normal marriage following on the previous fulfilment of the necessary probationary period. At this decisive solemnity there was the largest attendance that our ceremonies had, up to this time, drawn together. I then announced my resolution, duly made public in the preface of my new volume, definitively to refuse any professorship, whatever might be the facilities offered me for any course of lectures that I should give.

* See Testament, pp. 399 and 508.

† Mr. Hutton's translation ends here. The rest of this Saint Clotilde has been translated by Dr. Nicholson.

As founder of the Universal religion I should only speak publicly in the temple which is owing to us ; until we obtain possession of it we must content ourselves with the scanty public nature of our ceremonies : the pontiff must never again become the professor.

April brought back, though from a fresh point of view, the painful anniversary, which was this time celebrated in the very midst of my work upon the elaboration I was developing. The catastrophe which made thy incorporation with me complete was this time connected with the decisive establishment of the system of composition I finally adopted, by devoting to thy memory the section written on that and the two following Sundays. A prominent disciple* then came to Paris to spend near me the memorable three months, during which he never missed the two weekly interviews, which I granted him unasked. About the middle of this month appeared, to the deep satisfaction of all those acquainted with it, the short but important work† which made known the establishment of our rising body, by bringing in several honourable practicians. This was the main result of the valued stay made here by the remarkable author of this decisive act of faith, which I had fitly encouraged, without having in any way prompted it. It was at the close of this month that I noticed the more perfect reappearance after eleven years' interval, of our dates‡—this having been before marred by the faulty arrangement of the Calendar in common use, for it is more complete than that of 1851, as it includes with the year of my regeneration both that of my mourning and of the dedication.

The continuous activity of my new work did not prevent my feeling, in May, the recurrence of pecuniary pressure, to which the unworthy insufficiency of the Positivist subsidy has made me only too accustomed up to the present time. A decisive repetition then indicated the full meaning of the step spontaneously taken by the best of my English disciples,§ whose monthly letters to me are publicly addressed to the venerable High Priest of Humanity. Being soon imitated by one of his principal French fellow-adherents, this periodical manifestation

* Dr. Audiffrent. See Letters from Auguste Comte to him, *Lettres à divers*, Vol. I, p. 1.

† A Pamphlet upon Positivism, by M. de Constant of Holland. See the Eighth Circular of Auguste Comte.

‡ In 1850, as in 1851, the weekly and monthly dates corresponded with those of 1845. See Note, p. 390.

§ John Fisher, of Manchester.

confirms the advent of the new Priesthood. During this month the unexpected comparison of a feeble French essay with the valuable Dutch pamphlet brought distinctly home to me the superiority of practitioners over theoreticians as helpers in the establishment of the religion. About this time also came about the decisive improvement I observed in the young British disciple,* of whom I had almost despaired the year before, above all morally. Then also occurred, to the satisfaction of all, the decisive meeting which I had planned between the two eminent practitioners,† one a proletary, the other bourgeois, or rather a patrician, whom I intend appointing to the organic triumvirate. At the same time a serious special incident in my systematic work made me feel most deeply how purely altruistic was my individual unity by the impossibility I fortunately felt of producing anything under any egoistic impulse.

June showed the sad instance, the first since the institution of the Positive subsidy, of a month absolutely unmarked by any income. When pointing out this anomaly in the next quarter's accounts, I yet expressed the hope I preserved, and still have in my present straitened circumstances, of avoiding any exceptional appeal for this year. The trouble which this caused me, though it never interfered with my work, was fortunately counter-balanced at the end of the same month by the ready agreement of my noble-minded printer to publish the great work for which I requested his co-operation. Thus began, without any effort on my part, the printing of an enormous volume, which was frankly announced as the first instalment of a work in four volumes of about the same size. This is the fit reward of the upright personal conduct which, under most difficult circumstances, has founded Positive credit in an exemplary manner. The same month recalls the interesting visits of a noble German widow,‡ whose conversion will, I hope, soon become complete. Though I have not, since the departure of this baroness, heard from her, as I had expected, her mental and even moral attainments still give me great hope respecting her.

In the course of the next month the regular working out of my new volume was varied, in the public part of my life, by some incidents which I may fitly point out to thee. First of all I

* Henry Dix Hutton.

† Fabien Magnin and Auguste Hadéry.

‡ Madame la Baronne de Marenholtz-Bülów, Letter to her. *Lettres à divers*, Tome 1, part 2.

must mention the special confirmation of the rise of our American Church as a consequence of a second direct report from the high-minded friend of its distinguished founder.* This noble working-man affords the best proof of conversion to Positivism by his adoration for thee, specially shown in his private celebration of thy holy festival, while dwelling in the midst of the most anarchical population. Then began also the first systematic attempt to inaugurate the religious league indicated in the last of my smaller works, when I commissioned one of my best theoretical disciples† to work out with the real head of Catholicism‡ the advent of spiritual liberty. At the same time a distinguished English disciple§ accepted the glorious commission of making known the advent of Positive diplomacy by a dignified appeal to the British public with a view to discontinuing peacefully a long-standing aggression on the independence of Spain.||

In August I must, to begin with, note my first meeting with the noble-minded Brazilian widow¶ who appears to me to show, in feeling, in mind and in conduct, every appearance of becoming a precious disciple, if I can sufficiently modify the lines of a metaphysical train of thought. During this month an approaching Positivist marriage gave rise, under unforeseen circumstances, to my priestly interference by clearing up, at their very first appearance, a serious disagreement which was imminent between the two families. On the direct appeal of his Catholic mother, I led the bridegroom to a concession such as would satisfy the scruples of his family and mark the deference due to a form of worship which we replace by a better one, while keeping a respectful attitude towards it. And I was soon appealed to by the family of the bride, whose unreasonable alarms had caused a painful friction which I was able successfully to allay. Two mothers,** one Catholic, the other free-thinking, were thus led in the same direction to recognise the authority of the new Spiritual Power which is already seen to extend, as a consequence of its deeply relative character, beyond the regenerated circle. Towards the end of this month I received a visit of the young British disciple,††

* John Metcalf.

† M. Sabatier.

‡ The General of the Jesuits.

§ Dr. Richard Congreve.

|| By the cession of Gibraltar to Spain. See Dr. Congreve's essay on Gibraltar—in his published *Essays*, Vol. I, p. 5.

¶ Madame Brasileira—to whom Auguste Comte addressed several letters.

** Madame Foley, senior, and Madame Jullien.

†† Mr. Henry Dix Hutton.

whose decided improvement I had recently marked. On this, his third visit, I was able to recognise how much he had really progressed, and this enables me to count henceforth on a valuable helper, the earnestness of whom, practical rather than theoretical, was marked by a useful publication.*

September must first record the fortunate completion of the longest of my final volumes†, in which thy holy influence is deeply marked, though without any direct and special invocation. Then was produced its dedication which must throw a new light on my power of rendering glory to those worthy of it, by drawing out of an unjust obscurity the worthy master‡ of whose teachings I was deprived by death thirty eight years before. At the same time occurred the second celebration§ of the preliminary stage of married life, in the person of the distinguished disciple about whom I had recently some anxiety. This new and decisive instance enabled an institution of such a kind to be all the more appreciated, as it was then applied to him who most opposed it at first. This is an instance of how Positivism has already shown its fitness to regulate human life by bringing the fundamental tie to perfection in the midst of universal anarchy. This ceremony was specially worthy of notice by my explanations and warnings on the subject of the feelings and behaviour of true believers in regard to the various local and temporary forms of worship. I pointed out its character by my recent maxim, *conciliatory in action, inflexible in principle*, one naturally in harmony with that faith which must gradually bring all the others into subordination during the period of the final transition.

This present annual confession will always be distinguished from the former ones, and even from those which will follow, as the first to be in the normal manner completed since I executed the Will, which has brought us so close together. In this confession the outpourings of my heart begin to develop the character naturally resulting from a certainty, which they before wanted, on two points, namely as to their necessary publication, and that only after the full recognition of the harmony of our joint labours. In accordance with the date definitively fixed for the completion of each confession, this character will be shown during all the course of my final construction, by its coincidence

* The publication was made in Paris, August, 1836.

† *Synthèse Subjective*, the only volume Auguste Comte lived to write.

‡ Auguste Comte's mathematical teacher in Montpellier Daniel Encontre.

§ Betrothal of Edouard Foley, September, 1836.

with the end of each new volume, or the commencement of its successor—so as better to unite my private to my public life.

I already feel relieved from the anxiety which specially concerned the volume I have just finished. The close of this work has been marked by the interesting composition to which I had been impatiently looking forward during the second half of this philosophical period. And now after three weeks of leisure I find my attention has fixed itself on the general arrangement of the following volumes. I have now sufficiently determined the plan of the only volume that was left for consideration, and I have decided on the dedication of all of them, including that of our sacred correspondence, and even of the poem which, I hope, will follow immediately after it. During the coming year of rest which precedes the two years devoted to the two volumes of my great work on Morals, a journey of affection will complete my full reconciliation with my family, supposing that my aged father is spared to me until then. This filial visit, duly prepared for by an explanation really religious in character, will follow on the exceptional minor work which I have recently planned on the sacred metropolis where thou wert born* six months after I arrived in it for my life's work.

As this expansion of my heart is at the present time confidential, I am free to announce to thee a final project, which will be always kept secret between us up to the moment when it is put into execution. In 1867 I expect to be able, as an exceptional instance, to devote my seventieth year to a volume on the first Philosophy, which, though never announced, seems in harmony with the circumstances of my second life. This work, unexpected, however desirable it may be, will be specially dedicated to thee as was that which testified to my regeneration :† of the seven names‡ fitly grouped with mine, thine alone will occur twice.

I am thus led to end this twelfth yearly outpouring by pointing out to thee the new direction which the grief, ever inherent through our objective separation, takes more and more. Its tendency is sufficiently shown in the verse which I have recently added to the principal part of my daily prayers : *I have sorrowed enough for myself ; it is thee whom I must now pity.* Thou wast suddenly snatched from the happy future which was shortly to have made up for thy painful past ; for myself, I have only exchanged thy objective influence for a subjective ascendancy

* Clotilde was born in Paris on 2nd April, 1815.

† That is the *Positive Polity* which was dedicated to Clotilde.

‡ Namely : Fourier and de Blainville, Clotilde de Vaux, Encontre, Rosalie Comte, Ternaux, and Laffitte.

of a purer and equally strong character, especially as concerning my public life.

With the gradual rise of the religion the foundation of which posterity will attribute to thee equally with myself, I feel how precious thou wouldst now be to Positivism in which the want of an able woman's pen now becomes more evident than ever. However much I may hope to find others who might worthily take thy place in this respect, they could not all of them together ever equal the qualities which I saw naturally combined in thee. Thou wert, unconsciously, as I repeat every Tuesday, the most distinguished woman, in heart, in mind, and even in active powers, that the history of the world has shown me until now. It appears to me that the future could not easily produce a better type. Besides thy actual influence on posterity, directly brought to bear on the Western public, it would have been thy privilege in a more private sphere, to have helped the advent of the final regeneration by fostering the rise of the true Positivist Salon. The hopes I have recently formed of seeing it rise, as a consequence of the last marriage I celebrated, make me specially feel the loss of her who would best have presided over it, for no one will ever be able to take her place in this respect any more than in her chief sphere of action.

Eternal Love and respect

AUGUSTE COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

Born 19 January, 1798, at Montpellier

Founder of the Universal Religion.

*Virgine-Madre, figlia del tuo figlio,**

Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te !†

* Virgin-Mother, daughter of thy son. (Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII).

† May I love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee ! (Thomas à Kempis. *Imitation of Christ*, Book III, Chapter 5).

THE WILL OF AUGUSTE COMTE
WITH THE DOCUMENTS WHICH RELATE TO IT

(Copy of the Envelope)

My Will

DUPLICATE

Given to the perpetual President of my Executors
(M. Laffitte)

Paris, Monday, 22 *Bichat*, 67
(24 December, 1855)

AUGUSTE COMTE
(10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince).

Begun Thursday, 18 *Bichat*, 67 (20 December, 1855), this duplicate was finished the Monday following and given the same day to M. Laffitte. (*Fifteen pages*).

The Universal Religion

LOVE FOR PRINCIPLE AND ORDER FOR BASIS
PROGRESS FOR END

Paris, 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince
Sunday, 21 *Frederic* 67 (25 November, 1855)

In the name of Humanity, represented for me by the noble and
tender patroness to whom I dedicated my principal work,

Here is my Will
written throughout with my own hand

ORDER AND PROGRESS. LIVE FOR OTHERS
LIVE OPENLY

Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio,
Quella che 'mparadisa la mia mente.
Ogni basso pensier dal cor m' avulse.

A.—I entrust the execution of this Will to *thirteen* of my
disciples, viz. :

M.M. Audiffrent

De Capellen

Le Baron W. de Constant Rebecque

Deullin

Don José Florez

Dr. Edouard Foley

Hadéry

Laffitte

Lonchampt

Magnin

Papot

Dr. Robinet

Count Stirum

Among these executors of my will, I choose, to represent
the body and to preside over their action as a body, M. Laffitte,
with whom I have been, since the year 1844, in uninterrupted
intimacy.

Although his eminent qualities of heart and intellect are impaired by his deficiency in energy of character, I hope, by virtue of his satisfactory preparation, that he will be the first disciple on whom I shall confer the priesthood of Humanity. The distinction which I have even now accorded him is so deserved that his colleagues cannot take umbrage at it.

To him I entrust, for ever, the guardianship of this will, a duplicate of which will soon be placed in his hands. When he shall leave Paris, he will deposit it with M. Foley, till his return. If the latter were absent at the same time, he should choose among his colleagues a provisional substitute.

All the executors named above I shall ask shortly to get a thorough knowledge of its provisions at M. Laffitte's. Each of those who, after its communication, shall declare their acceptance of the office I offer them, will be authorised to make for his own personal use alone a textual and complete copy of the will. No other person is to have knowledge of it, with rare exceptions, which I shall grant in writing.

Considering the duration of their operations, it is possible that my testamentary executors may be occasionally prevented from discharging their office. Therefore, each of them, including the president, is empowered to choose a substitute, and even a successor, subject in both cases to the assent of his colleagues. None of their deliberations shall be valid, save in case of urgency, unless there be present more than six, including the president, but this participation may always be by writing or oral, at the pleasure of each.

Two circumstances, easily understood, might oblige me to change the principal dispositions of this will. But whatever additions, suppressions, or modifications I may have to introduce, I shall always take care to insert them at the end of the original MS., and of the copy given to M. Laffitte. All the dispositions which shall not have been formally changed ought then to be executed just as I proceed to state them.

B.—First I must explain the peculiar situation which has led me to delay till now an act which my age would have made me accomplish sooner had I been sufficiently free. The irregularity is the result of a fatal marriage which I contracted on the 19th February, 1825, with the unworthy woman from whom I was finally separated the 5th August, 1842, after seventeen years of

intense suffering. Over and above the full community of all property, actual or in prospect, with reversion to the survivor, my inexperience led me to sanction by a legal act a too common fiction, by acknowledging that she brought me twenty thousand francs, which was about twenty times more than the whole of what I received under one form or another. As all that I possess is far from equalling this pretended dowry, I am thus rendered powerless to leave anything by will, even with the best reasons, the separation in 1842 having, moreover, been effected without any judicial intervention. So it was that naturally I was diverted from making a will which a fatal contract annulled beforehand. The generous fiction of my youth must not lead to fresh fictions in my maturity, whatever moral sanction they might have drawn from their real aim. I was enabled to escape with dignity from this situation solely through the peculiar change effected ultimately in my material existence by my career as a whole, in harmony with the natural exigencies of my social mission.

My subsistence for the last seven years, having had no other basis than a voluntary subscription, it is necessarily on that subscription that depends the payment quarterly of the annuity of two thousand francs, which of my own free will I granted to my unworthy wife. I recovered then my power of making a will by virtue of the conclusive declaration which ends the fourth and last volume* of my *Positive Politics*, published on the 14th September, 1854. Of the three arrangements thus placed under the protection of the collective Positivist body, the first will be security for the execution of the two others. My unworthy wife will remain, no doubt, authorised, whether as legal heiress, or on the strength of her fictitious contribution, to take all that may be in my rooms at the time of my death, including perhaps the objects which are the personal property of my excellent daughter Sophie. Nevertheless, this power will be naturally cancelled by the need to retain a more important pension, for which my testamentary executors might easily find a better use. Thus it is that my public life has nobly broken down the obstacles due to the mistakes of my private life. By continuing after my death a pension in no way deserved, I have obtained as a natural result full respect for the two other parts of my declared wishes; a result which justifies as reasonable the will, the chief

* English trans., p. 480,

aim of which is to complete and enlarge the scope of the three resolutions.

The accomplishment of this duty was then necessarily delayed till the exceptional year which separates the year in which I ended my religious construction from the year in which I enter on its synthetical complement. After finishing the *Positive Politics*, I first tasted, as was due, the rest required by such a work ; then I had to prepare a course of lectures which the Government compelled me to adjourn ; lastly I had to write as an episode the small work which I have recently published. Since this last labour, my Will is directly the order of the day, but it requires an internal preparation, meant to place my soul in the fitting frame, whether towards myself or in relation to others.

Such a duty could not be properly discharged without inspiring profound emotion, the action of which upon the brain may better all the rest of my life. Though the repugnance to dying is usually attributed to egoistic motives, it admits, under the normal conditions, an altruistic explanation, not only as regards the Family, but also in reference to the Country and Humanity. Every noble death legitimately inspires a regret analogous to that which is awakened by premature losses ; while the extinction of parasites always comes too late, whatever the age at which they disappear. The greatest imperfection in the human organism consists on this, that the body and the brain are so disproportionate that the brain could ordinarily last two or three times as long as the body, if the statue could do without the pedestal. Fontenelle became extinct at a hundred, but he presented every sign of a vitality in the brain which as yet was in no way impaired. Thus, the Positivist Religion sanctifies the instinctive feeling which makes us, at any age, regret life, when we remain able to love, to think, and even to act, for the Family, the Country, or Humanity, although the weakness of the body may cancel the power of the brain. Nay, it is the most active careers which allow us best to conceive of new services, were it not that the impossibility of realising them forbids such projects, as I often felt in my youth when forming the general plan of my life.

Having almost accomplished my fifty-eighth year, I might now cease to live, after having worthily achieved first the philosophical foundation, then the religious construction, which, from the outset of my career were to constitute my social mission. I am even warranted in anticipating that were my death near, it would

facilitate the advent of the spiritual power, which I have called definitively into existence despite the anarchy of the West. For, in my subjective life I should soon rise above the envy and the insubordination to which are due my greatest obstacles. Holding without opposition the rank in which I have been publicly placed amidst the great reformers, my work, my philosophical, social, and lastly, religious work, would be carried on under a name which by the consent of all would be surrounded with an irresistible halo. But these indisputable advantages attaching to death are more than compensated by the fresh services which I can render if I attain to the longevity of Fontenelle.

Though the second portion of my career must be shorter than the first, it should be fuller of achievement, since my religious construction, as vast as its philosophical basis, requires a complementary work of equal extent, the Universal Synthesis which I am going to begin. Were I to disappear before completing this last third of my work, my successors might more easily make good the deficiency than in respect of the preceding works. None the less is it fitting that the last term of such a progression be accomplished by the author of the two others, in order that the series of regenerative works may attain greater ascendancy by becoming more homogeneous. This great labour, which, allowing for accidents, will be ended in six years, will be followed, three years later, by the publication, already promised, of the exceptional correspondence, in which I shall establish solidly the immortality of my sainted colleague by enabling people directly to appreciate our union. Thus completing in less than ten years my literary career, my spiritual function, then less disputed, may subsequently be long exerted for counsel, consecration and discipline, with more efficacy than at present. So I may be able to offer the generation that is to close the revolution of the West a decisive type of the sacerdotal office, when disengaged from all extraordinary work, and brought directly to bear on its normal destination, whereas hitherto it has only been indirect in my case. It would moreover be an advantage for the Founder of the true Religion to be an example himself of the increased duration of life, which that religion is destined to introduce into the average by perfecting our cerebral and even our bodily unity.

All combines to prove to me that when I shall have completely ceased writing, my personal ascendancy will long remain necessary to preside over the explanation and application of the universal

doctrine which I have now established. It is of importance that the Founder of the Religion of Humanity should continue to live till he have transmitted the high priesthood to a worthy successor who is not yet found, despite my generous illusions. Under this conviction, my isolation and the material destitution under which I am suffering at the present moment, have in no way made me wish to pass soon into the subjective existence. These passing hindrances, attendant on the nature of my mission, only occasioned a further adjournment of the act which I accomplish to-day. I felt it right to put it off till my patience and resignation should have stripped such incidents of all power to impair the noble serenity the task requires. By this last delay my soul is better prepared for the duty which I fulfil ; for my difficulties have made me feel more strongly that the spiritual power is bound only to offer advice and express wishes, not to utter its will or give commands, even after death. Such are the various reasons which have gradually led me not to write my Will till towards the end of the exceptional year in which I had formally to state, first, my wishes as to my interment, then my further directions.

C.—Considering my whole philosophical and religious career, I need now no precaution to ensure me against any theological interview or ceremony, either before or after the last moment. I have always thought myself fortunate in being born a Catholic, as elsewhere it would have been difficult for my mission to begin, in consequence of the dangers, both intellectual and moral, attendant on the protestant or deistical education. But from the age of thirteen I have been, by a natural process, entirely freed from all supernatural beliefs, not excepting the most fundamental and most universal, from which the Western World drew all the Catholic doctrines. Whatever were originally the evils of so precocious an emancipation, I remain convinced that it was indispensable for my object, since I could not really give systematic form to the worship of Humanity till I had completely got rid of God. Still, after having undergone the sceptical phase more completely than any of my contemporaries, I found myself as early as twenty-four definitively freed from it, through my discovery of the sociological laws, a discovery which impelled me directly to reconstruct the spiritual power. Since the year 1825, my writings bear witness to a growing respect for Catholicism, the immediate and indispensable precursor of the religion whose

special task it is to consolidate and carry out the inchoate construction of the twelfth century. In proportion as I wrought out the doctrinal system of Positivism, I became less and less capable of returning to supernatural beliefs, but also I felt more veneration for a theology which had long had an organic character, and a more profound contempt for metaphysics, which have never been otherwise than destructive.

As soon as it shall be thought that I have ceased to live, I am to be left in my bed simply as a sick person, till my body be distinctly in a state of putrefaction, the only really certain sign of death, in the absence of which there frequently occur interments of a deplorable kind. As no one ought to be subjected to an anatomical examination without his own consent, I forbid in my case this idle curiosity which I have always thought as barren for the intellect as it is fatal to feeling. This respect is to be carried to the point of preserving me from any embalming. Such vain efforts against decomposition are derived from the absolute and personal synthesis, more especially since Monotheism proclaimed the resurrection of the body. When religion becomes relative and social, the struggle becomes contemptible, because we only aspire to live again in and through others, if we have truly lived for others. It is as memorial or sign that we must regard the remains of those we have loved, whatever be the state they naturally come to, and so we are led to respect them scrupulously instead of delaying their inevitable dissolution by profaning their indivisible structure. If we consider the cinerary urns of military antiquity and the private or public cenotaphs so much used by the Mussulmans, the worship of the dead is seen to be independent of the preservation of their forms, the actual contemplation of which would disturb our inward evocation.

On Saturday, the 1st of May, 1847, in a holy visit to the cemetery of the East,* I pointed out specially to M. Laffitte the precise spot for my tomb, in the centre of a little valley adjacent to the tomb of Eliza Mercœur. It is thither that the Positivists, first meeting at my home, are to conduct me under the sacred banner of the Universal religion, if, as I hope, the government allows them this display of an emblem of peace and order. I wish the procession to halt before the Church of St. Paul (Rue St. Antoine), where, since the end of November, 1854, I go every Saturday, the day of my weekly visits to Madame de Vaux, to pray for half-an-hour in the chapel, which is contiguous to the Baptistery. My

* Père Lachaise.—Ed.

heart led me to adopt this practice in commemoration of the incomparable ceremony which took place there on Thursday, August 28th, 1845, from which day I have always dated my spiritual marriage with my angelic colleague, when we were joint sponsors of her nephew.* My intellect was not long in sanctioning the custom to which I have already owed happy inspirations by its inclining me to a sounder estimate of the true relations between Catholicism and Positivism. The explanation here given ought to prevent any mistake in respect to the manifestation for which I have just asked ; it will evidence in a special case my general respect for the places of meditation which the liberality of Catholicism keeps always open for souls hungering after moral culture. Were this short halt forbidden, it would be enough to lower respectfully the Positivist banner, making at the same time the sign of our religion, when the procession passes before the temple of the true founder of Catholicism.

Notwithstanding the ingratitude of those who at present avail themselves of my labours, without aiding to preserve me from destitution, they will most of them be eager to come to my funeral to display their regret, and perhaps to boast their gratitude. I urge my testamentary executors never to reject these manifestations, which in some cases may become sincere, even, before the general voice makes them obligatory. I must, however, except from this indulgent view three persons, who left the Positivist Society in 1852, having been members since its foundation. Had their unworthy conduct concerned me alone I should have confined their punishment to my resolution, which I stated at once, never to accept any subscription from them, but, on the present occasion, I have to stigmatise their ignoble calumnies of my adopted daughter. Outside these three definite exclusions, in regard to which, without mentioning names which I dislike, I fear no misconception, I recommend that my funeral procession admit no participation, individual or collective, coming from my unworthy wife or from the Polytechnic school.

If the public chapel of the cemetery has then become open as a civic institution to all religions, I desire that my coffin be carried thither first, in order to accomplish with more decency the ceremony which should precede the interment. If this is not possible, the celebration at the grave should be limited to a few words pronounced over my tomb. In any case true commemoration requires, according to our ritual, the regular place of our religious

* See Letter on Baptism, p. 543.

meetings, in which there should be convoked a special meeting of all my disciples of both sexes, for the third Sunday after the interment.

It is to be feared that, whatever their zeal, my executors may not be able to carry out the wishes stated in the last volume of my *Positive Politics*,* as to a common tomb for me and my three guardian angels. If the chief wish is attained, there shall be placed in a coffin made for the purpose the body of my sainted companion on the right of mine, our hands joined, and holding the small medallion which she herself filled with her hair, Sunday, the 5th October, 1845, calling it her *heart's gift*. This talisman, which, ever since, I use in my daily worship, shall be merely held upon my heart by my right hand, in her green purse given her by our Sophie, if it is impossible to secure the actual presence of her body. In this case, the special coffin would enclose not the body but a simple cenotaph, with the inscription, '*Clotilde de Vaux, the inseparable companion of Auguste Comte, born in Paris, 3rd April, 1815, died in Paris, 5th April, 1846.*'

The empty coffin should only contain in the handkerchief Madame de Vaux gave me, the lock of her hair which I possess, cut from her head after her death, besides my old watch with gold case and dial plate, which served my friend during her last three weeks of life. As to my venerable mother, I can now only hope for a cenotaph, enclosing the little watch which is all that I have of her, and bearing the inscription: '*To the worthy mother of Auguste Comte, Rosalie Boyer, born 28th January, 1764, at Jonquières (Hérault), died 3rd March, 1837, at Montpellier.*' As for the one of my three patronesses who will, I hope, survive me, the free assent of her excellent husband or of their two sons will be necessary ere she share her tomb with me.

After seven years of daily experience, I proclaimed her my adoptive daughter, before a numerous audience of both sexes, at the religious ceremony of Thursday, 18th July, 1850, viz., the celebration of the second Positivist marriage (that of Dr. Segond with Mlle. Leonie de Lanneau). But this exceptional relation ought never to affect, even in thought, the normal harmony of the admirable household, whose perfect union I can daily appreciate, an union which might justly lead them to reject any separation of tombs. If those whom my third angel loves more than myself were more afflicted than honoured by the association which I have

* English trans., pp. 480-1.

desired, my executors will substitute for the filial coffin a simple cenotaph enclosing the dress bequeathed to Sophie by our Clotilde. The inscription in full would be : '*To the incomparable adopted daughter of Auguste Comte, treated as a true sister by Clotilde de Vaux, Sophie Bliaux, wife of M. Martin Thomas, born 18th September, 1804, at Oissy (Somme), canton of Molliens-Vidame.*' Empty or occupied, the two coffins, maternal and filial, should be placed, the former to the right, the second to the left, of the double conjugal coffin. The sacred group is to be covered with a single stone, from which rises a headstone of marble. Round the semi-circle in which this headstone will end, the sacred formula of Positivism (*Love for principle, and Order for basis Progress for end*) will enclose the title '*Auguste Comte and his three angels.*' Any enclosure being especially unsuitable for the philosopher who enjoins the *living openly*, the common sepulchre is only to be surrounded by an iron railing, the two sides of which shall each be provided with a wooden bench with a back to it.

D.—When they proceed to the operation subsequent to my burial, my executors shall, before everything, attend to the payment of my debts ; first, my private, then my public debts. The former consist merely of two sums, which I should long since have repaid had my material situation been less deplorable. First M. Captier, agent of the cloth manufacturers of Lodève, living in Paris (22 rue Neuve-Bréda), generously lent me *a thousand francs* on the 26th March, 1846. Secondly, my excellent Sophie and her worthy husband offered me in the most touching manner, when my distress began, *six hundred francs*, which their sacred insistence induced me at last to accept on the 20th October, 1848. Although, in these two cases, no one thought of an investment, I hope that my testamentary executors will obtain permission, in my name, to add to the payment of the principle that of the simple interest at five per cent. per annum.

I have no other public debts, that is to say, debts in connection with my mission, than those resulting from the printing of my works, dating from 1848, the period when I ceased to have a publisher ; the sale of all my books whatsoever being from that time devoted to the payment of the expenses of printing. Confined at first to each volume, sold separately, the guarantee soon became general for all the volumes of one and the same work,

and finally I made all my works a common concern, those included which preceded the adoption of this plan. Thus it was that, notwithstanding my personal poverty, I founded my credit for printing purposes, so disappointing the infamous hope of my vile persecutors, who wished above everything to stifle my voice.

This, then, is the special method which my executors are exclusively to adopt in paying whatever sums may be owing at my death to my honourable printer (M. Thunot). The amount is at this moment reduced to about *nine hundred francs* still owing for the last volume of my *Positive Politics*, besides the whole cost of my *Appeal to Conservatives*, of which I have not received the bill, but which will come, I imagine, to *seven hundred francs*.

The new labours I have undertaken for the three treatises which are to form my *Subjective Synthesis*, forming in all four volumes, may increase this debt, beginning with the volume which I am about to commence, and hope to publish before the end of 1856. When my printer has been completely paid, the entire sale of my works ought to reimburse the two generous advances, of about *two thousand francs* each, by which M. Lonchampt in 1851, and M. Audiffrent in 1854, ensured the publication of my principal work.

This reciprocity in the method of meeting all my printing expenses should receive its final application in the case of the correspondence between Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux which I hope to publish in 1864, according to my promise, intermingling the letters of both in order of their dates. If this sacred hope can be realised, I shall commence this exceptional volume with the biography of my noble colleague, followed by my own, to which I shall join the present Testament, together with my daily prayers and my annual confessions. In case of premature death, my executors, after having published what may remain in manuscript of my *Subjective Synthesis*, ought immediately to set about this publication, taking care that each letter be followed by its answer.*

* My letters must not be published from the originals, which I have always left, where Madame de Vaux placed them, in the glove box which I gave her on the occasion of the baptism when we were united. The copies must be used which I made before sending them off, in order to prolong emotions, the value of which I felt deeply; these copies are in packets, month by month, with the corresponding letter of my friend; I use these packets for reading over annually each of our letters at its date. The collection of originals wants seven of the last written, there being no room for them in the box, which I took away at Madame de Vaux's request three days before her death. These seven letters were kept by the mother and brother of my friend, notwithstanding my special application for them, and

On this supposition the two biographies would be wanting and the correspondence would only be preceded by this Will, with its accompaniments above-mentioned, the upper drawer of my writing table will enclose all these papers. Having lately heard that the unfinished manuscript of *Wilhelmine*, which I believed to be destroyed is in the hands of a brother of Madame de Vaux, I hope that my executors may then be able to obtain its surrender and thus to add that sketch to our letters.

When the sacred volume shall be published, the same method ought finally to be adopted for my *general correspondence*, reducible to one volume, if all my letters are excluded, which have no public interest. On occasion of this last publication, it should be stated therein that I long ago destroyed all my unpublished materials, and that I disavow beforehand all writings claiming to be mine which are not in print.

All the expenses incidental to my typographical fund being thus defined, I must now specify the charges, heavier and more lasting, which I formally imposed on the Positivist subsidy at the end of my principal work. Although this triple declaration has been mentioned above, it is necessary to reproduce it here word for word, not thereby precluding its subsequent completion.

1.—The body of my adherents will continue the annuity of two thousand francs mentioned in my fourth circular, in order that I may discharge up to its natural term the obligation incurred, in my youth, by my only really grave error.

2.—A life annuity of fifteen hundred francs shall be consecrated, by the gratitude of the true believers, to the adopted daughter who, for the last thirteen years, has devoted to me her invaluable assistance.

3.—This eminent proletary will keep, for my successor, in its actual condition, at the cost of the universal church, the sacred domicile where arose and was accomplished the religious evolution of Positivism, the sacred rites of which shall continue to be celebrated there until the erection of a special temple.

contrary to the formal injunctions of her father, when, without success, he ordered the restitution of *Wilhelmine*, which had been bequeathed to me. To check the collection from which the publication is to be made, I notify that our entire correspondence contains 86 letters from Madame de Vaux, from the 1st May, 1845, to the 8th March, 1846. If I publish them myself, I only propose to send to the printer the general copy that I shall make for the purpose, intermingling the two sets of letters in order of date, so that each one may be immediately followed by the answer. In case of premature death, I recommend my executors to adopt this plan in order to assure the scrupulous preservation of the originals, including my own first copies, as explained above: these memorials ought never to be taken from my rooms.

E.—Of these three wishes the first, as I have explained, will secure the freely giving effect to the other two, while imposing on the Positivist subsidy a charge in which the rule: *Man ought to support woman* receives its most extreme application. After having generously assured the subsistence of a person from whom I never received anything but evil, my disciples will not find burdensome the duty of providing for the modest existence of the angel who, for long past, has worthily acted as my invaluable auxiliary. Their grateful solicitude should even survive my adopted daughter, extending to her excellent husband and her second son, the elder being in a position to support himself. If, then, Sophie dies before them, her life annuity shall pass to her husband, M. Martin Thomas, but with a reduction to one thousand francs. When he dies this pension then reduced to six hundred francs shall be appropriated to their youngest son Paul, born in my house Thursday, 13th July, 1848, the day of the first Positivist marriage; this charge on the voluntary subsidy is to continue during this child's life: he has, I think, in him the making of an eminent man.

For the full statement of the pecuniary obligations which I bequeath to the body of true believers, it remains for me to specify the most prolonged but the least burdensome, sanctioned in 1854 in the final chapter of my principle work. I hope soon to see suppressed in France all theological budgets, so that the subsistence of all priests whatever shall rest, as does my own, on the voluntary subscriptions of their respective adherents. But if this enfranchisement is not accomplished in my lifetime, I wish to further, as much as I should have done during my life, the voluntary maintenance of the Catholic worship at Paris, in accordance with the declaration to which I have just referred. In addition to the share which my disciples may individually take in it, they should as a body fulfil my public undertaking to contribute one hundred francs yearly to the support of Catholicism, so long as a voluntary subsidy shall continue. Half of this subscription shall be specially devoted to the Church of St. Paul, in recollection and continuance of the modest subscription which I shall always continue to take there every week, even during my periods of work.

My threefold resolution reproduced above requires a special explanation as to its last portion. In requiring my adopted daughter to keep my apartment in its actual condition for my successor,

it was not my meaning that she should be excluded from our domicile by the advent of a second High Priest of Humanity. If such a one arises before the death of Sophie, he must honourably await her loss before entering on possession of the apartment of the founder of the Universal Religion.

In her enjoyment for life of the domicile the present arrangement of which she must scrupulously retain, my adopted daughter will only be subjected to the following restrictions: She is bound to allow the meetings of the Positivist Society to be held there every Wednesday evening. When the Positivist Committee is sufficiently formed for the West, I desire also that it should meet, at its will, in my apartments. The eminent conservatress of the Pontifical residence will be bound to allow free use of all my books to each one of my thirteen executors. But I request these disciples to return each volume to its proper place, and above all things to respect the general division of my library into three parts, one for habitual use, the second subsidiary, the third superfluous, placed in different rooms. The volumes of the last alone shall be at the free disposal of my executors, but with the exception of the complete manuscripts, which form part of it, of all my printed works, they shall be preserved as monuments or facsimiles without disarranging any treatise. All my other books belong in advance to my successor, who is charged to transmit them to succeeding pontiffs, so as to form the perpetual foundation of the library of the High Priest of Humanity.

To this general bequest there is no exception save in respect of supplementary volumes, which I desire to offer to some disciples as personal keepsakes, the whole value of which arises from the feeling which prompts these trifling gifts. I bequeath to M. Hadéry the small edition of the *Divina Commedia*, which serves me for daily use; the large annotated edition belongs to the Pontifical library.

M.M. Audiffrent, Magnin, de Constant, Lonchampt, and Foley, will respectively take my own copies of my *Analytic Geometry*, my *Popular Astronomy*, my *General View of Positivism*, the *Positivist Catechism*, and of the *Appeal to Conservatives*. The double copy of the *Imitation* (the original and its translation by Corneille), which I read every morning, dating from the 1st January, 1848, is to belong to Mme. Elise de Capellen. I bequeath

to my excellent disciple Mme. Marie Robinet, the *Journée du Chrétien* which Mme. de Vaux gave me, on our last Sunday, as her convent book, of which I read some pages every Sunday evening since the catastrophe. Although none of these volumes contains at present any inscription, I propose to put in each the one which befits it. By reserving this care for the last week of my life, I hope that each keepsake will gain in value.

I give the three seals I use, the Political (*Order and Progress*), of the 18th January, 1847, the Moral (*Live for others*), of 17 Descartes 61, and the Practical (*Live Openly*), of 17 Moses 67—the first to M. Laffitte, the second to M. Lonchampt, and the third to M. Magnin.

As for my pontifical seal, of the 4th Frederic 62, on which the title *Religion of Humanity* circumscribes the sacred formula of Positivism, I entrust it to M. Robinet for him to hand it to my successor at the ceremony of his inauguration.

Everything that I possess should, moreover, be considered quite as much as my books the property of my successor, for whom I preserve each object, whilst I leave this care after me to my adopted daughter; I only except from the entail my purely private effects. Amongst these I leave to Sophie in full ownership transmissible at her will, all my plate and china, besides all my linen and all clothes. She will keep my repeater watch, with its gold chain, and the little gold box attached to it, which contains some hair of our companion, to hand them all in my name to her son Paul, on the 13th July, 1869, the day of his majority. The things properly belonging to Sophie, or even to her family, being partly mixed up with mine, my executors should at once accept her statement when it is necessary to distinguish them. Sophie is to have the special portrait of our Clotilde. I bequeath to my sister, Mdlle. Alix Comte (2 rue Fournarié, Montpellier) the likeness of me which comes from Holland, framed, so completing my despatch of my bust to our father after the reconciliation which I initiated.

Recognising these various exceptions, my successor will possess, on the same terms as I do, that is to say, for the succeeding pontiff, everything that my apartments now contain, and everything that I may ever place therein. But he must respect, as belonging to the sacred treasure of the Universal Church, all the relics of Clotilde de Vaux, contained in the two drawers of my writing table, which are set apart for this purpose until

they are removed to the first temple of Humanity. The same veneration is due to the red arm-chair, covered with a green cloth, and marked on the edge in front with my initials in red wax. Having always been the seat of Mme de Vaux during her sacred Wednesday visits, I constituted it, even during her life, and still more after her death, the domestic altar; I have never sat on it myself except at our religious ceremonies. It may serve for this purpose alone as long as its existence shall allow, with the flowers which my sainted colleague made for me, and which I have constantly kept in their vase for use at our public rites, although they have long been faded.

F.—I must now complete my Testament, by specifying therein, in reference to my social mission, several wishes and counsels which, notwithstanding that they are at present premature, ought to be sketched out, in case of my dying before I have been able to formulate them suitably. However imperfect be as yet the Positivist Society, founded in March, 1848, it should continue, allowing for eliminations, becoming all the time more fraternal and venerant, until the formation of the Positivist Committee, indicated, as early as 1842 at the end of my *Positive Philosophy*. I assign it, after myself, as perpetual president, M. Magnin; he is empowered to choose from it, at need, a substitute, and even a successor, invested with similar power, according to our law of transmission. Its weekly meetings ought not to cease when the Positivist salon shall have taken a worthy shape under feminine influence; it may usefully subordinate itself to the Positivist Committee when that body shall be sufficiently formed.

Having only hitherto been able to determine one-third of the Western basis of this Committee, I still am bound to announce here this incomplete selection. Of the eight members belonging to France I have gradually found five, MM. Laffitte, Magnin, Hadéry, Deullin, and Lonchampt. As for the remainder of the West, I have only chosen M. le Comte de Stirum for Holland, Don José Florez for Spain, M. le Baron de Ribbentrop for Prussia, and lastly MM. Richard Congreve, Henry Edger, and John Fisher for England. Composed rather of practical men than theoreticians, the transitional Committee is, however, intended above all to second the systematic exertions of the universal pontiff for the general installation of Positivism.

The High Priest of Humanity is always to preside over this auxiliary body, which I shall myself have directed if I can constitute it before my death. Besides the normal superintendence of the Positivist subsidy, which chiefly concerns the priesthood, the pontiff will keep the initiative of additions to it and changes ; so long as the Positivist Society lasts he will take care that its president be a member of the Positivist Committee.

The moment has not come to announce the selections I have gradually made, since 1848, for the systematic triumvirate which is to direct the French Republic during the principal portion of the organic transition, when the conservatives will introduce Positivist chiefs. But it would be a grave omission in my Testament if I did not record therein the results, even now satisfactory in my eyes, of this secret examination. In case of my premature death, I must here advise the French dictator to institute, at the proper moment, the Positivist dictatorship, by proclaiming *M. Magnin* director of the Finances, *Hadéry* governor for the Interior, and *Deullin* governor for the Exterior.*

Ever since I have sufficiently instituted the Positive religion, my chief attention has been more and more devoted to the definite formation of the sacerdotal nucleus, which should consist of fifty philosophers before the end of the present century. Its rise will find a material security in the Positivist subsidy, which will become the central budget of the Positivist clergy, in proportion as governors and governed become converts to the true faith. If this voluntary fund were equal to its purpose, I could initiate on a rudimentary scale its twofold application, by assigning to *M. Laffitte* and *M. Florez* two life annuities, one sacerdotal, the other apostolic, which would open to them a worthy career.

Besides these two selections, which are ripe in my opinion, the apostolate and even the priesthood will soon receive some valuable members, whose accession depends mainly upon the increase of the Positivist subsidy. On this account, I have

* Although tardily informed, *M. Deullin* had at first refused to allow himself to be designated as eventually to fulfil political functions for which he felt no sort of aptitude. *Auguste Comte* insisted strongly and showed very great vexation at the gap which this refusal would leave in the arrangement of his plans for the future. His health was beginning to fail : *M. Deullin*, influenced by a feeling of deference which all Positivists will appreciate, thought he ought to submit ; but it was upon the express condition, accepted by *Auguste Comte*, that his nomination should be provisional and that a substitute should be found as soon as possible.

Illness soon followed by death prevented our master from fulfilling his promise and modifying his will on this point.—(*Note of the Executors, inserted in accordance with a decision of the 6th Sept., 1883, upon the request of M. Deullin.*)

recently determined, for priests and vicars, the encyclopædic conditions, which are to guarantee to the public as well as to the High Priest, the intellectual fitness of the philosophers, when their moral qualities have been fully ascertained. These trials, which follow one another at intervals of three months, consist of seven printed theses, at the choice of the candidate, on the seven fundamental sciences ; seven days after its reception each thesis is to be publicly completed by an oral examination. Although M. Laffitte and M. Papot are as yet the only theoreticians whom I deem at once equal to this candidature, MM. Audiffrent and Foley appear to me sufficiently near it for me to be able already to guarantee their sacerdotal future. The eminently sympathetic and synthetic natures of MM. Robinet and Bazalgette, seem also to call them to the Priesthood of Humanity, notwithstanding the existing deficiencies in their encyclopædic preparation. Considering their moral excellence, I would not hesitate, if they asked it of me, to exempt them from the mathematical thesis, and even from the three following theses, no consideration being of force enough in my judgment to exempt from the three last. Finally, I regard M. Fisher as a worthy aspirant to the Positivist priesthood, the intellectual conditions of which I think him able in a few years to fulfil as well as he already fulfils the moral conditions.

G.—All the dispositions of this Will are, by the facts of my situation, more or less subordinated to the consolidation of the Positivist Subsidy. Without this guarantee, the person who, during my life never did me anything but evil would come, after my death, and cancel my last wishes in the name of the legal power which my imprudent generosity conferred on her in my youth. But the voluntary subsidy which alone assures her maintenance allows the attainment of the renunciation by my unworthy wife of any endeavour to interfere with the complete execution of my Will, the bases of which were solemnly laid, in 1854, at the end of my principal work.

However precarious and, indeed, insufficient, this nascent institution, I feel inspired by a full confidence in its efficacy when I am no more. If my death is at hand, it will cause a rapid increase in the Positivist subsidy, by arousing public indignation against the abandonment in which I have lived, by disposing people to better appreciation of the doctrine I have founded,

and by showing the necessity of furthering its adoption. But if I reach the longevity I desire, I shall be able personally to consolidate this indispensable guarantee of the independence of the regenerating priesthood.

In accomplishing the duty which I have just finished, the special concentration of my attention on the various contingencies to which I am exposed has confirmed my habitual hopes and reinvigorated my chief powers. Necessarily based on the constant assumption of an approaching death, this operation has made me feel, from its very commencement, the value of the moral reaction which it was calculated to call forth. As it required from me no effort of mind, I have been able, without prolonging the task artificially, to leave a free course to the spontaneous incidents, more particularly those of conversation or correspondence which tended to delay it. Having thus lasted nearly three weeks, the emotions due to this labour have become more familiar to me by mingling with my daily life : they have so far strengthened as to cause a physical disturbance, which I have found a better inspiration for the feelings such a duty demands. I have been enabled, by virtue of this prolongation, actually to see the cessation of the material distress which I experienced at the beginning of an operation, the course of which has reproduced the contrast of personal alternatives which will always be inseparable from my social mission. My own personal amelioration, the edification of my best disciples, and even the instruction of posterity, all enjoin on me the closing this my work by a clear manifestation of the impressions it has awakened, so far as is possible with a language more suited to convey thoughts than feelings. Analogous emotions are always inseparable from such an act, when it is accomplished under normal conditions, during the final phase of full maturity, and does not originate in the vain impatience which induces men to proclaim their last wishes before they have tested by experience their first.

My attention naturally concentrated on my permanent mission, my impression from the first was that the discharge of this exceptional duty would affect it in a lasting manner, by fitting me better for the complement of my second career. The two great elaborations which I have in succession achieved, have chiefly consisted, the one in the comprehension of the past, the other in the determination of the future. From the point of view at which the second has placed me, my final work should directly

develop the normal state which I have fully instituted without having as yet been able satisfactorily to constitute it. Since the Positive religion is now founded, it remains for me to characterise the universal Synthesis, of which that religion will secure the ascendancy. Thus led to speak to the present in the name of a future, which has been irrevocably defined, I could not better inaugurate my third and last elaboration than by this personal excursion into futurity. This subjective journey into the normal world in which my name will be an object of blessing brings me back to the anarchy of the present, with an unshaken feeling of the independence and dignity which befit true regenerators. Occupying my tomb in anticipation, I can henceforward hold to the living a posthumous language, which will be the more completely freed from the various prejudices, especially the scientific prejudices, to which our descendants will not be exposed.

Founder of a religion which systematises the supremacy of feeling over intellect and action, I am bound, more than anyone, to give my main attention to my moral improvement. An act which, by its nature, has placed me in direct connexion with my final state, will by no forced consequence give the preponderance to the subjective character during the last half of my second career. The result should be, in all respects, a better subordination of egoism to altruism, the prime progress of the human soul. I can already distinguish one decisive result as regards the most personal of our feelings—that of property.

Stripped by an act of my will of all that I possess, I have a fuller sense of the thorough reality of the admirable sentence in which my angelic colleague places the pleasures of devotedness above all others. The objects which I have henceforward to keep for possessors whom I have determined render me more familiar with the true appropriation, systematised by Positivism, in which the rich in heart take the place of the poor in spirit of Catholicism. This ultimate condition of the instinct of conservation depends for its full attainment on a worthy testament, which at the fitting moment substitutes selected successors of the testator's choice for undetermined or compulsory inheritors.

As our advance towards perfection should always issue in the development or consolidation of our unity, I feel, as a fact, that this act tends to make me more sympathetic, more syntaetic, and more synergic—in a word more religious. It makes me already taste the noble existence which Aristotle and St. Paul will ever

preserve in all higher souls. No impression can better manifest the Great Being, in whom I feel myself already fully incorporated, whilst continuing to belong to its objective element, I have suitably joined myself to its two subjective elements. Far from troubling my life, the contemplation of my death purifies and strengthens my direct existence, the prolongation of which, whilst it delays my final ascendancy, will make it more complete and more indisputable. An operation which perfects in me the unity founded on union ought to lengthen my life, if I am able to extract their full value from the normal relations between bodily health and cerebral harmony. I enter then on the complement of my second career under a secret impulsion, the equivalent of that which my principal work received from the exceptional dedication in which Positivism became religious. Although the present introductory step is not to be compared to the former, for in that my heart and intellect were simultaneously agitated, yet its longer duration, three times as long, and even its slighter intensity, should make it accord better with my third elaboration, an elaboration more systematic than inventive.

These hopes as a whole appear to me already confirmed by a perceptible increase of the unparalleled harmony which my eternal companion established between my private and my public life, both equally centring in the angel who passed without recognition. My existence having thus become more like her own, I feel the distance lessening, which is a consequence of my objective existence, the sole hindrance which keeps ordinary people from seeing the two founders of Positivism as posterity will see them. Our perfect identification will become the best recompense of all my services, perhaps even before the banner of Humanity be solemnly lowered over our common tomb.

Ended Thursday, 11 Bichat, 67 (13 December, 1855)

AUGUSTE COMTE

*Founder of the Religion of Humanity
Born 19th January, 1798, at Montpellier
(Sacerdotal Seal)*

Additions to the Will of Auguste Comte

Written by himself at his residence
10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris

Henceforward inseparable from my Will, these additions ought always to be read, and ultimately published with it, and with all the justificatory documents to which they refer.

Thursday, 3 *Moses*, 68 (3 *January*, 1856)

AUGUSTE COMTE

FIRST ADDITION

Sunday, 13 *Moses*, 68

(13 *January*, 1856)

To repair an involuntary omission, I bequeath to M. le Comte de Stirum the copy of the *Iliad* (Lebrun's translation) which I gained as a prize for French eloquence at the Lycée of Montpellier in August, 1813, when I completed my course of rhetoric. Since 1848 it is the one I use to read over each year the incomparable poem with which the poetry of the West opens.

SECOND ADDITION

Monday. 21 *Moses* 68

(21 *January*, 1856)

Of my thirteen executors five reside habitually in Paris. Only one of the eight others is at present at the Western centre. It has not been possible for my Will as yet to be read by any but these six, each one of whom has carefully examined it, but no one has as yet copied it.

Four of them have already stated to me the impressions which this perusal has made upon them. One only of these communications has fully satisfied me, in an admirable letter from M. Lonchampt, which I read to the Positivist Society

on Wednesday, 9 Moses. This eminent disciple lays most stress on the immortality which this mission will necessarily confer on those whom I have charged with it, when my Will becomes public, in one or other of the ways indicated.

The three other communications have made me aware more or less of a faulty tendency to criticise, with as little utility as competence, my expressions, and even my feelings, towards my unworthy wife.

No will would be possible if its executors were bound to share the dispositions of the testator, or if the testator were bound to adapt his language to their tastes. The mission is one which is naturally limited to the duties which are specified, those who discharge them never becoming responsible for sentiments which they are incapable of appreciating. In the absence of such reserve on the one part and of such freedom on the other, the spontaneous picture of the latest condition of a soul would degenerate into a chilling comedy. Such an attitude at the close of life would be especially inconsistent in the philosopher who was at all times able to *live openly*.

When I saw eminent disciples ignore such plain rules of conduct, I soon became aware that they were passing through a fresh attack of the revolutionary malady to which existing Positivists are often liable as a consequence of their ordinary antecedents. True, we give the name of complete Positivists to those who reject no important dogma, but I have chosen as executors those only whose regeneration has already extended from convictions to feelings. But even in these chosen few, conversion has rarely reached its third and last stage, which is alone decisive in practice, when it embraces habits which most often remain revolutionary, at least in the earliest period of each probation. Public life has frequently shown me in my best disciples the inclination at first, on every important occasion, to give free play in opposition to me to the presumption and mistrust which are characteristic of the Western malady. Enough if I here refer to the dictatorial crisis in 1851, and two years afterwards, to the institution of the chaste inauguration peculiar to Positivist marriage; a violent insurrection broke out, in both cases amongst those who were soon most completely reduced to order. These conflicts, ever imminent, are a consequence of the scepticism which was the starting point of nearly all my existing disciples, and they constitute the most painful fatality of the unparalleled situation wherein I am placed

as regenerator. Whilst Saint Paul and Mahomet, amid bitter struggles, obtained complete adhesions, I may, without any external attack, at any moment, be deserted by all my adherents, such are the habits due to their original negativism.

I shall not overcome this fatality unless as long a life as Fontenelle's allows me an ascendancy over the truly regenerate sons of my existing disciples, so awakened to the dangers of scepticism as to preserve their children from it. Still, I had not anticipated that the insurrectionary tendency would spread from public to private life, especially among my executors. The opening of the present year will be sadly marked by an experience which shows how slightly, since their last revolutionary outbreak, my best disciples have advanced towards their complete regeneration. It is necessary to insist on this sign, bearing as it does on the main source of the slow growth of the universal religion in surroundings which can only offer it a passive resistance, as there are no counter-convictions. In such a situation the only complete, harmonious, and even opportune, doctrine would have already surmounted the culpable silence of an anarchic press, were it not that the influence of its best apostles remains habitually paralysed owing to their instinctive insubordination.

On these grounds I was induced to seize so capital an opportunity of pointing out the chief defect of existing Positivists, by calling together yesterday, Sunday, the 20th Moses, the six executors now present in Paris, to hear at my residence the communication the case required. Its direct aim was to justify and complete my Will—indirectly it should rectify the deviation which rendered it necessary. The revolutionary character of the objections is at once obvious from their frivolous incoherence, an incoherence which imports the theologico-metaphysical Absolute into a doctrine always Relative, confuses private and public life, and the transitional with the normal state. But these remonstrances can be better judged from the moral side: criticising the testator without improving the testament, they assume that I am impelled, for personal reasons, to violate the rules which I have laid down. From their evident futility such reproaches deserved no examination, but it was sufficient that I saw them occur to worthy disciples for me to feel the necessity of explaining myself. Taxed with harshness by true friends, I foresaw that my enemies would accuse me of cruelty, especially after my death, if I did not now break the generous silence which has always been turned

against me. The more my language was attacked, the more fully was I bound to set forth, in a thoroughly crucial case, explanations which in default of a proper opportunity I had previously had to put off, notwithstanding the drawbacks of this long reserve.

Over and above my personal defence, which is inseparable from my social ascendancy, I ought above all things to protect the only two beings who have really appreciated me: their calumniatrix may deny anything and invent anything to gratify her enmity. As the sum of the years increases over the tomb of my angelic companion, the confused state of our present recollections allows my holy passion to be assigned as the cause of the culpable conduct of my unworthy wife. My incomparable adopted daughter is even more exposed to the attacks of the envenomed tongue of her who assumes atrocious motives for my best acts, and finds propagators for all her calumnies. I must accordingly defend my two principal angels, and even my venerable mother, whose memory is continually assailed. Thirteen years of peace have procured me the calm required for this three-fold duty; she who might during that time have judged herself and repented has never been able to allow any fault in herself. Her present attitude is a sign how she would interpret my silence if I died before her, on the hypothesis proper to my Will. The supporters whom she has now will have their numbers and vigour greatly increased by my death, owing to the body of antipathies which the founder of Positivism cannot but naturally inspire in the leaders of the Western press.

All those who, from dread of the discipline of the intellect, formerly wished to prevent me from transforming science into philosophy, ultimately gathered round the leading representative of academical anarchy.* Their official power and the dependent condition in which I stood towards them, at that time directed persecution on my material existence. At present it is my reputation alone, my private and public reputation, that can be attacked by those who, in their fear of moral discipline wish to prevent me from transforming philosophy into religion. They will instinctively unite under the successful writer,† who, become the champion of my unworthy wife, best represents the sum of the forces, whether academical or revolutionary, which resist my reconstruction of the spiritual power. His barren

* Arago.

† Littré.

adhesion to the fundamental dogma of the Positive religion gives this enemy the appearance of a friend, ever since the useless patching-up of friendship, which I was indulgent enough to tolerate a year after the decisive rupture of 1852. Although his provisional assistance has been always more noisy than useful, and in spite of its being entirely exhausted, the distinction it has given him will render more easy attacks in which he will seem to respect the doctrine while criticising its founder. I was bound, therefore, in a special case to bring it home to my best disciples, how indispensable their due subordination becomes in the second struggle of Positivism, less violent, but graver and more prolonged than the first.

The better to discharge the various duties proper to the meeting of yesterday, I began by setting forth the foregoing considerations, which I stated would be added to my Will, and ultimately published with it. After this preamble, I proceeded to the explanation of my married life, by reading my two decisive letters of the 10th January, 1847, and of the 6th Cæsar, 63 (28th April, 1851), preceding each by the letter which gave rise to it on the part of my unworthy wife and her champion. The second and principal communication had for its primary aim to repel the ignoble attack made (1851) on the Positivist Society, at the instigation of her who wished to prevent me from proclaiming the gratitude due to my eternal colleague. To support this explanation, these two pairs of letters will henceforth be annexed to my Will as papers justifying my conduct to my thirteen executors, to the public, and to posterity.

One of the three remonstrances having also blamed my allusions to my persecution at the Polytechnic school, yet another addition to my Will, will give a long promised explanation: the addition will contain my three official letters of 1844, which were duly appreciated by Marshal Soult.

By the whole meeting and its lasting results my principal disciples, and through them all the rest, will be duly forewarned and prepared for the long struggle which is beginning. A noble silence is the only fit answer to the constant attacks of the revolutionary press, never interfering with the natural advent of the universal religion; yet it was necessary to retain the power, at the right moment, of undeceiving those who deserve to be undeceived.

As regards posterity, this essential complement to my Will, and the corresponding portion of my biography, will have a lasting

influence by its offering an instance of the legitimate apportionment of praise and blame. If my memory is to glorify certain feminine types, several of which have already been accepted, their apotheosis will be consolidated by an exceptional condemnation which will bring into fuller light my justice. The régime which will exalt the affective sex might divert it from perfecting itself, were it not that the life of the founder spontaneously recalled how far feminine anomalies might go. So too for men, the glorifications, which I shall have bound to my own, will gain by the contrast resulting from well-considered reprobations. To consolidate universal discipline it is of moment that decisive examples teach the powerful that not with impunity can the elect of Humanity be assailed, especially when they are loved and served by goddesses.

At the close of this meeting, I specially announced the existence of a secret so grave that if I divulged it, my unworthy wife would be given up even by her chief defender. I confided it, in 1826, under the seal of confession, to the celebrated La Mennais, in the presence of his best disciple, the Abbé Gerbet, at the beginning of my cerebral crisis. During my speech, 15th December, 1842, before the Tribunal of Commerce of Paris,* I became aware that this secret was known to two revolutionary leaders, who were conversing in a low voice behind me. Whether their knowledge came from the confessor, or rather from the various persons who had it even before me, I was bound to preserve unbroken a silence which might neutralise all statements of the kind. Nevertheless, my generous reserve, which I intended to break through with my sainted companion, must give way to my own just defence and that of my three angels. Wishing to observe towards the unhappy woman all the consideration compatible with this duty, I shall only reveal the fatal secret in the event of my death preceding hers, and I shall delay that communication to my last day. This resolution compelled me, on the score of contingencies always possible to make one single confidant even now; I opened myself, therefore, on Monday last, 14th Moses, to my conscientious Sophie, whose perfect discretion I can guarantee, even towards her worthy husband.

The conclusion of this meeting led me^m to provide for the case of some of my executors, in consequenceⁿ of my explanations refusing the office I have proposed to them. I stated, therefore,

* See p. 524.

that without ever ceasing to respect, considering the intention, even scruples which seemed to me ill-grounded, I should always be ready to fill up each vacancy as it occurred. Although my thirteen nominations have naturally fallen on my best disciples, after fifteen months of secret scrutiny, I have felt regret at not being able to consecrate by admission to the list names almost as worthy of such an honour. Every vacancy will enable me to repair without scruple an omission which I deplore: the scarcity of true Positivists would not prevent my recasting, at need, the whole of the eminent list. The new selections might be not unnaturally inferior to the earlier in position and even in talent, but might better meet the conditions of confidence and submission which are the especial requirements for the office they fill.

THIRD ADDITION

Thursday, 24 *Homer*, 68

(21 February, 1856)

Wishing to leave Don José Florez a special memento of the profound esteem with which his heart, his mind, and his character inspire me, I bequeath him the small edition, four volumes in 18mo. which I have long used for my yearly reperusal of the incomparable epic of Cervantes. I regret my inability better to testify my gratitude to the eminent disciple who alone satisfactorily characterised my whole nature when he spoke of me as the *simpático filósofo*.

FOURTH ADDITION

Tuesday, 8 *Aristotle*, 68

(4 March, 1856)

One of my executors, my excellent disciple Dr. Robinet, has properly pointed out to me, after lately reading my will, the necessity of a complementary step in which I immediately concurred and have just taken. It relates to the secret announced in the last paragraph but one of the second addition. In accordance with his wise advice, the confidence I made to my adopted daughter would, after my death, be insufficient and even illusory, if I did not make it the subject of a special document, one, however, never to be read save by my testamentary executors, and only by them after my death. Without such confirmation, the verbal assurance of the excellent Sophie would lack due weight except with my best

disciples. Our enemies would not fail to represent the fulfilment of this duty as a calumny invented by my adopted daughter. They have already shown such unscrupulousness towards her that anything may be looked for on their part in defence of my unworthy wife. But the precaution indicated will compel them to turn upon myself an accusation which, when so directed, can gain no serious credit.

An unforeseen and passing interruption of my new elaboration enabled me yesterday to introduce this necessary complement of a measure which I trust may never need to be carried into execution. Under the title, *Secret addition to the Will of Auguste Comte*, I drew up this painful record, and enclosed it in an envelope, sealed with my three ordinary seals, and having an endorsement destined to prevent any unwarranted perusal. Before closing up this declaration, I read it through to my adopted daughter, who recognised its complete conformity with my verbal confidence. If I survive my unworthy wife, I shall destroy this document, and the fatal secret will always remain unknown, thanks to the scrupulous discretion of my sole confidant. But if she should survive me, the zeal and wisdom of my testamentary executors will determine what use is to be made of the declaration in order to defend my memory and the honour of those who belong to me. In order to complete this action, I was bound to devote this fourth addition to a statement of its grounds, of its nature, and its accomplishment.

FIFTH ADDITION

Thursday, 10 *Archimedes*

(3 April, 1856)

Wishing to leave Monsieur Papot a special token of my profound esteem for his intellectual and moral qualities, I bequeath him my copy, specially bound, of the second edition of the first volume of my *Positive Philosophy*, which will recall to him the mathematical origin of the sympathies so nobly developed by one of the best of my disciples.

To the generous publisher of this reprint I bequeath my copy of the American translation of the same volume, completed in 1851, under the title of *The Philosophy of Mathematics*, in order that M. Deullin may retain a special mark of the way in which I appreciate the whole nature of a man early called to eminence in practical life.

SIXTH ADDITION

Sunday, 27 *Descartes*, 68
(2 November, 1856)

Several of my testamentary executors have pointed out to me betimes, as regards the whole of my arrangements after death, a serious difficulty arising from the existing law as to literary property. My unworthy wife thus getting legal possession of all my works, printed or in manuscript, the value of which would be increased by my death, their sale would enable her to neutralise my will by renouncing her pension. In order to provide against this disaster, my first project was the immediate sale of all my writings to the two eminent disciples who made the noble advances above mentioned. They would at once have made this payment, abandoning all claim to repayment of the sums advanced, and of the interest attaching. Moreover, they would have taken a religious obligation, in the presence of three chosen Positivists, to pay over to the *typographical fund* all the proceeds of the property thus acquired after their own entire reimbursement. I should thus have surmounted the difficulty in question, while adhering to my sacred resolution never to derive any personal profit from any of my labours. But when I was on the point of organising this solution of the difficulty, I finally rejected it on consideration of the typographical fund, a fund which I may only transmit, not alienate.

This fund belongs to the Pontificate of Humanity to meet the cost of worthy publications. As the law authorises me to give away my books and any of their editions, I can, in my lifetime, transfer this collective fund to my successor, under the religious obligation not to use it till after my death, and to hand it over equally as a gift to the succeeding pontiff. If I die before having worthily instituted my pontifical succession, I shall give the fund to the disciple best qualified to employ it in conformity with its destination.

However grave the danger pointed out, I may not elude it by measures of a purely temporary character, which would be in direct contradiction to my sacerdotal character, and also inadequate. The risk to which such conduct exposes me is, rightly judged, preferable to the voluntary impairment of the precious institution which I have founded with so much difficulty. Compelled, in accordance with my mission, never to have recourse to any but spiritual guarantees, my object in this addition is to condemn beforehand any diversion which may be attempted, after my death,

of the typographical fund under the cover of defective laws. If the unworthy heiress wished, as legally she is entitled to do, to sell my literary property, my testamentary executors might by moral means defeat the plan by calling on every true Positivist, in my name, never to buy such an edition. If properly made, and repeated as occasion served, the exhortation would divert a publisher from advancing the sum required, previously to any re-issue, for the repayment of the claims which are an existing charge on the typographical fund.

SEVENTH ADDITION

Sunday, 11 *St. Paul*, 69
(31 May, 1857)

Dr. Foley, having been recently compelled to remove his residence to a distance of thirteen leagues from Paris, M. Lonchampt will henceforth be joined with him, in perpetuity, as the official depository of the duplicate of my Will during any absence of M. Laffitte.

EIGHTH ADDITION

Thursday, 8 *Charlemagne*, 69
(25 June, 1857)

M. de Blignièrès, captain of Artillery, the author of an *Abridged and Popular Exposition of the Positive Philosophy and Religion*, is specially excluded from my funeral procession, as are the three ignoble unnamed persons with whom he takes finally his place, such has been his whole conduct towards me, more particularly since his recent publication of that deplorable compilation.

NINTH ADDITION

Monday, 19 *Charlemagne*, 69
(6 July, 1857)

When explaining in Section E of this Will the mode of disposing of the various objects found in my apartments after my death, I neglected to specify cash, bank notes, or any other money securities whatsoever. I must here declare that I bequeath these various sums to my incomparable adopted daughter, whatever the amount may be. But if the amount should exceed the special repayment to be made to Sophie and her husband, then that repayment shall be made from this source: my disciples will thus be dispensed from collectively discharging this private debt; and the legacy to my adopted daughter will only be increased by whatever remains over and above.

TENTH ADDITION

* * * * *

Justificatory Documents annexed to the Will of Auguste Comte

Letter received Friday evening, 8 *January*, 1847

MADAME COMTE TO HER HUSBAND

Last September, as I was unable to write, M. Lenoir was requested to tell you that I had long been ill, with a nurse day and night. In fact that I had had, and had still, to meet expenses far beyond my means.

It did not enter my mind to ask you for any increase of my allowance. But it was necessary that there should be no delay in making the payments. Since then I have heard nothing from you.

I am not in business, I do not make money, I do not, therefore, require a quarter's allowance in advance. But it is very necessary for me to get the allowance regularly every month. I have refused money. I have never asked for any. I assure you it costs me much to have to write to you on the subject. I have waited as long as I could. But this is the fourth month. I owe money, and as the finishing stroke my rent is now due.

When I left your house several years ago, not a fortnight passed without your telling me to rid you of my presence, etc. ; at last I left you because you wished it. If your means do not permit you to support me away from home I shall return. I have no resources but those which come from you. I cannot do without them, and I cannot run into debt. The life would be intolerable.

I do not go out except to visit M. Littré. You can make the remittances to him, if you have no objection to the plan. It is the best way for me if I am to receive it as soon as you remit or send it.

Could I have gone on in my present condition I should have done so, for I am very, very grieved.

C. COMTE

Answer the next day but one, and a copy made.

(*True Copy*)

TO MADAME COMTE

MADAME

A fatal marriage, the only capital error of my whole life, imposes upon me towards you special duties which I venture to

say I have always scrupulously fulfilled. Your whole conduct during twenty-two years has finally reduced them to simple pecuniary obligations, as to the performance of which I am sure that I deserve no reproach. Although the allowance which I made you at the time of our irrevocable separation was evidently too great for my means, I was much pained when the material persecution which I am now undergoing forced me to suppress one-third. Hitherto, every quarter, at one or the other rate, you have been so regularly paid in advance that you should have considered the present delay as proceeding from insurmountable passing difficulties, which annoy me most because of their reaction upon you. It all comes from an unusual delay in the monthly payments of M. Laville*; I do not think that you can seriously fear the least indifference or negligence on my part with reference to so grave an obligation. Moreover, the experience of twelve preceding years assures me that this periodical payment will soon resume its ordinary course, and that I shall thus be able to send you immediately the last quarter's allowance for 1846.

Although the resources I have formed for myself pending the recovery of my position at the Polytechnic appear likely soon to become sufficient for my needs, I shall notwithstanding be unable, no doubt, during some more quarters, to make my payments in advance, as I always did before this crisis; but I wish to resume this custom as soon as my position will permit. For the rest, I can hardly believe that, after having regularly received, for three and a half years, an annual pension of three thousand francs, which has only for one year been reduced to two thousand, you have not on this sum effected some economies enabling you to support some delays in payment, delays foreseen and even announced.

A definitive though recent rupture prevents my continuing to avail myself, for my remittances, of the agency of M. Lenoir, in spite of his offer to continue it. I consider it, in all respects, well replaced by that of M. Littré, if, as you point out, he really accepts this quarterly function, of which, in that case, I should avail myself on the next occasion, in the form which you wish. But do not consider that this new method can relieve you in any way from the usual receipts, to which I shall never cease to attach great importance. Any renewal of the strange objections which

* The principal of the School where Auguste Comte was teaching Mathematics. He finally lost this appointment in October, 1848.

were made to them during the first two years of our final separation, would only end in my at once changing the means of transmission, by sending you a simple commissionaire, who could hand over nothing without an acknowledgment.

The evident bad faith of the explanation you give of your definitive abandonment of the conjugal roof would suffice to preclude on my part all vain discussion on this subject, even if I had not, four years ago, irrevocably closed these fruitless debates. Think or speak on this subject as you please, attribute to me all the wrongs that you choose ; but be well convinced that the situation is irrevocable, and that I will never see you again. You long so misunderstood me as to attribute to weakness of character an excess of indulgence and long suffering which was really in the main goodness of heart ; experience should now have taught you that, if my will is sometimes a little slow in formation, it becomes finally inflexible.

After you had left me, on the third serious occasion, in May, 1838, when I consented to permit, without, however, having in any way solicited it, your return, I formally warned you that the fourth separation would be perpetual. I have since then often repeated to you this loyal warning, and during the last month of your residence, up to the decisive epoch of August, 1842, I lavished on you in this respect the remonstrances and announcements which my duty required. If your foolish pride at first made you think that I could not do without you, experience must soon have undeceived you. Three months after your departure, I had already let it be seen what my final domestic situation was, almost as publicly as to-day. As for your present extraordinary threat to return against my will on account of pecuniary difficulties, beware Madame ; any such attempt could only be very unfortunate for you. I am very fond of peace, but fear no sort of war. No pecuniary distress will induce me to overcome a too just antipathy, which time and reflection increase more and more, as they enable me better to understand, as a whole, your wrongdoing as regards me. Peace is at one and the same time my sole domestic good, the very foundation of my health, and the indispensable condition of the good philosophical employment of the few years of energy that still remain for my high social mission. For the four and a half years that I have at length enjoyed this peace, I have so enjoyed it that I am quite resolved to secure it by all legitimate means. It is impossible that you can look upon your

return as depending upon your own will, and as independent of a consent which I shall never give. However, the better to avert useless efforts, I warn you once for all, that, if you were to make a real attempt with this object, I should immediately institute a suit for a legal separation.

Your husband

AUGUSTE COMTE

Sunday, 10 *January*, 1847

As I think it important to leave you no illusion as to the possibility of ever seeing me again, I must seize the very natural opportunity which you afford me to-day, to make in decisive form a suitable disclosure which M. Lenoir undertook to explain to you last July, but his unheard-of weakness prevented him from fulfilling this voluntary office.

No one knows better than you to what extent the facts of my domestic life would have authorised, long ago, an exceptional attachment. But I am under no obligation here in any way to rely on these unhappy rights. The mere comparison of a few incontrovertible dates would place my conduct beyond all attack, even if the noble tie of which I have to inform you had not retained to the end the perfect purity as to which I shall always feel happy and proud.

Two years after our separation, I met, for the first time at her home, in October, 1844, a young lady, as irreproachable as charming, who at first excited my especial sympathy by a private history in close analogy with my own, although still more unfortunate and more unjust. With an intellect as brilliant as your own, she rose infinitely above you by the heart. The virtuous passion which I had the happiness gradually to conceive for her will always be the most marked feature of my private life. During a matchless year, the deep moral revolution which such an ascendancy alone could produce in me, reacted most happily on the whole of my new philosophic elaboration, by bringing out, in a more clear and decisive manner, the true emotional character of Positivism. Although twelve years younger than you, my angelic Clotilde soon granted me the return of affection, which I could never win from you. But after having thus had a glimpse of a sainted happiness, it was not long before I felt, in the most painful way, how I am for ever devoted to domestic

misfortune. At the beginning of last spring, I saw this noble and tender victim succumb, notwithstanding my most unflinching attention, in which I was helped by the active devotion, which, during eighteen consecutive nights kept my excellent Sophie beside her whose soul was large enough to treat as a sister this eminent domestic.

Such was, Madame, my sole true spouse, she who during the only night which I passed beneath her roof, at the beginning of her agony, after extreme unction, spontaneously characterised all my private destiny by this touching saying : '*You will not long have had a companion.*' For nine months I have not let a single week pass without going to renew, at her sacred tomb, the solemn promises which sweetened her last days : this outward worship, moreover, is but the sign of an inward worship, even more assiduous in its character, which will last as long as I last, because in it consists my chief personal satisfaction. After six months of incomparable suffering, I only succeeded in resuming worthily my philosophical work by writing the exceptional dedication promised to my eternal colleague, in order to show to the world the reasons for the deep gratitude, at once personal and social, due to her powerful involuntary influence on the fundamental improvement of my second great work.

Seeing this inevitable ulterior publicity, it was fit in every respect, Madame, that you should be in the first instance made aware of an intimacy which, notwithstanding its limited duration, will perhaps immortalise side by side with my name that of the angel whose life I could not preserve. Although my heart was never understood by yours, I hope that you know me well enough to feel that I have felt much pain in sending you this explanation, which has become as indispensable for your repose as for mine. The deficient energy of those, whom I had long since charged with the duty, compelled me at length, notwithstanding my just fear of afflicting you, to discharge it myself, seizing one of the occasions, necessarily becoming more rare, which lead me to write to you. The way chosen was, moreover, perhaps the most worthy of a man who has never feared to live openly, and above all things, needs neither mystery nor excuse on the subject of an affection on which he will always pride himself.

TO MONSIEUR COMTE
Répétiteur in the Polytechnic School
 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, No. 10

Mesnil, 27 April, 1851

MY DEAR MONSIEUR COMTE

You will find herewith Mme. Comte's receipt. Last Saturday week she told me that she wished to write to you, and that she would send it herself. Such a method of transmission having already been employed, I made no objection. You did not open the envelope which enclosed the receipt, and Mme. Comte has given it to me to send to you.

It was not without difficulty that I obtained this receipt. Mme. Comte, informed of the subject of the two last meetings of the Positivist Society, wished absolutely to refuse the money which I had sent her from you.*

She yielded rather to my pressing solicitations than to conviction, and she called upon me to place at her disposition all my own good will and all my influence with my friends to obtain for her, in case of need, a place in an almshouse. I need not tell you the painful impression which I retain.

So it is that, notwithstanding my extreme reluctance, I have determined to write to you on the subject. I know that it is one on which you feel deeply. And therefore I should reproach myself keenly if I did not approach it with the full consciousness of being animated by the friendliest sentiments for you. I feel a just gratitude towards you which does nothing but increase: I avow myself on all occasions as under obligations to you, and I testify to those obligations by my action on all occasions, at any rate, so far as my little worth of all kinds permits me to do. I beg you therefore, in the name of these sentiments which you cannot doubt, I beg you, if anything in what I am about to say wounds you, not to impute it to any wrong intention.

I come to the point. It is not your desire, of that I am fully convinced, to compel Mme. Comte, by awakening in her just susceptibilities, to refuse the allowance which you make her. Yet that is the result to which I see things rapidly tending. With

* With reference to these meetings Auguste Comte has added the following note written with his own hand, to M. Littré's letter:—'Members present at the special meeting of the 22 Archimedes 63: Messrs. Laffite, Segond, Jundzill, Fili, F. Magnin, de Montègre Lefebvre, Belpeaume, Peyronnet, Piéton.' (*Note of the Testamentary executors*)

great difficulty have I this time overcome her reluctance. She several times refused to hear me further ; and although I did everything to combat an extreme resolution, which can but end, I fear, seeing the state of her hands, in the hospital, I own that my feeling was secretly with her, though my reason forced itself to urge her to adopt a more moderate course. This, then, is the real situation. The blows which you strike here echo there ; if you think they have no effect you deceive yourself gravely ; and it is my duty towards you to dispel the illusion. Her refusal of your allowance is inevitable if you continue to strike, and ultimately, a situation will be produced of which you will be the involuntary author, and which you certainly could not fail to regret.

Another consideration occurs to me. It was before the Positivist Society that you disclosed your grievances. On listening to the accounts which have reached me, seeing the effect produced on Mme. Comte, I asked myself whether you had not permitted yourself altogether to exceed your rights. Your influence upon my mind is very great ; I have a firm trust in your integrity, your uprightness, and your intellect. And yet my conscience objects. Whatever influence a man may have upon me, never shall he induce me to condemn an accused person unheard. This has been long my invariable rule ; it is out of my power to break it, and it would be as impossible for me to pronounce judgment in such a case as to say that two and two made five.

I continue my chat with you. There are almost always in the life of each man, especially if he is no longer young, things which he has done which he would like to undo. But one of the firmest precepts of the Positive philosophy, one of those which have most influenced my own conduct is that which commands us to adapt ourselves to what is unchangeable. Now, if there is one thing which cannot be altered, it is in a special degree the past. There it is, always deaf to our prayers, always immovable in defiance of our efforts. At one of the meetings, you said something concerning my own domestic interior. I thank you for the intention. But I cannot accept what you said as a faithful picture. No one knows how much patience I have needed, in the midst of so many causes of rupture, to maintain union, and not to come to very cruel extremities. But, as I pride myself on exact equity and on a constant revision of my conduct, I find it not hard to admit that, without doubt, quite equal patience was required

on the other side. At present I congratulate myself that the exertion has been borne, hoping that we shall arrive at the end of the journey. For you things have gone differently : a separation took place. But neither the laws of your country nor your own doctrine authorise a step further ; and, if the Positive doctrine allows exceptions, it is quite plain that the only person excepted from these exceptions is the Founder of Positivism, no one having it in his power to disengage himself as regards a third party. Your marriage is of the past, and, as the past, it is irrevocable.

I know that this is the point on which you are the most sensitive, and that you have given yourself to another lady. You want to evidence to her your gratitude and your affection. Be it so, she will be your Egeria, your Beatrice, your Laura. Refer to her and to her memory the new developments of your doctrine ; consecrate her memory, inscribe it on the title-page of your books, entwine her name with yours. But since the irrevocable past has decided otherwise, let her be nothing but a Beatrice. It seems to me that the dearest and most honoured memory may be content with the immortal splendour with which the great poet of the Middle Ages has surrounded the memory of the lady who opens to him the gates of Paradise.

Permit me to stray once more into private life. I now speak of myself. When my mother died I was struck to the heart. For six months my condition was truly alarming. I became aware of it myself ; I felt that I was on the point of losing my reason if it continued. What made the matter threatening was the loss of sleep. And this is how the loss of sleep was brought on : by one point or other I realised the greatness of my loss ; then I went back from point to point through my whole life ; and once entered on this path, I was lost. Days and weeks were then passed without sleep in retracing the passage which led to the catastrophe. At last, mere exhaustion gave me a little repose. But only to fall soon afterwards into recollections and sleeplessness. Perceiving the danger and instinctively wishing to save myself, I bent myself to the effort of breaking the chain of my memories. As soon as one presented itself to my mind, I chased it away as a dangerous enemy. I ended by gradually triumphing over the thoughts that possessed me. At the same time, as an accessory means, I entered into engagements with others, undertaking some great works which, I may remark parenthetically, after having done me a service, now weigh heavily upon me,

and absorb all my time. Systematic forgetfulness is a great safeguard against the recrudescence of the past.

What is the conclusion from this long letter? It is an appeal to sentiments of peace and calm and an attempt to drive away feelings of hatred and hostility. No one has shown more clearly than you how much the former ought to be cultivated, and the latter to be kept down. It would be a great happiness to me if I could contribute, ever so slightly, to give a calm to your mind which, moreover, need only manifest itself by silence.

Ever yours

E. LITTRÉ

Received Monday, 6 Cæsar, 63.

Copy of answer sent immediately.

(*True Copy*)

Paris, Monday, 6 Cæsar, 63

MY DEAR MONSIEUR LITTRÉ

I enclose the receipt due to you in return for that of Madame Comte. I presumed that the latter was contained in a letter which I sent back without opening, as I shall henceforth treat all letters coming from that source. But it was natural to expect that it would come back to me through you. Our respective accounts are now in order.

Deeply touched by the noble sentiments which you are kind enough to express towards me, of the full sincerity of which I have such evidence, I could in no way be hurt by the cordial representations in your exceptional letter. What they contain of involuntary injustice is the natural result of the generous silence which I have always observed with you as regards a guilty woman, whose defects, very grave though they be, only make themselves felt in complete intimacy. The nature of your relations with her is such as to allow her to let you see only her good qualities. By opening your eyes sooner to her deep-rooted faults, I feared to deprive you of an acquaintance which is agreeable to you, and to shut her out from a noble and salutary association. But your letter obliges me at length to abandon a reserve which is turned against me. Still, I shall confine my explanations, as in the exceptional meeting of the Wednesday before last, to what is strictly required for a satisfactory correction of your natural

conjectures as to the so-called harshness of a conduct the distinctive feature of which has throughout been an excess of indulgence.

First I must reassure you on the subject of the pension. Mme. Comte is a clever actress, almost always on the stage, especially towards you. The stir there has been lately seemed to her to call for this demonstration. But at bottom, I am convinced, on the strength of knowledge too dearly bought, that there is nothing serious in it. If this game is kept up till the next quarter I shall provisionally accept any abnormal repayment, always on the understanding that I keep it available for the end of the comedy.

My decisive letter of the 10th January, 1847, a copy of which I sent you at the time, declared to her that, for a long time past, her conduct as a wife had left me only pecuniary duties towards her. I have always fulfilled these duties scrupulously even in the midst of my greatest personal distress, to the point of being at present a year in arrear of my rent, unable to procure the new clothes I require, and compelled to run into debt with my incomparable Sophie. All this leaves it open to me to let the comedy just begun have its free course, without ever reproaching myself for its consequences, be they what they may.

That memorable letter also announced that the eternal friend, whose objective loss was then recent, was my only true wife, and that to her I had nobly dedicated the great elaboration which I was beginning. Mme. Comte fully accepted this declaration by a silence of more than two years; if she could ever seriously purpose to refuse her allowance, it must have been then. When I consented, from pure compassion, to receive her letters and to answer them during the first half of 1850, I first of all repeated this formal expression of my inmost sentiments, and this condition of our correspondence was again tacitly accepted, although in the secret hope of subsequently eluding it. One of her letters even then announced, without any particular reason assigned, the present comedy of the hospital and her refusal of the allowance.

Before I describe my domestic situation, I have to avail myself of the opportunity given me to throw light on the true theory of marriage, by drawing a distinction between legal union and moral union.

The first can only be justifiably dissolved in exceptional cases, under which I did not come, but of which my noble and tender Clotilde offered the most touching example, sufficiently explained to our associates. As for the moral union, it may in all cases terminate by the prolonged unworthiness of one of the parties. If the legal bond continues, but there be no children, it is reduced to material duties. It cannot react on the moral conduct further than to impose chastity as the condition of an exceptional affection. Society neither can nor should ever require that a heart abandon its own development, for the sole reason that its first efforts failed, without any blame attaching to the failure.

I am, for the rest, very disinterested in respect of this general question. For as between Mme. Comte and myself there is no question of breaking the moral union, for it never existed. As for the legal tie, I will honourably undergo all the material consequences of its just perpetuity. I have scrupulously accepted its affective consequences, for my sacred passion was always as pure as it was deep. My eternal widowhood fully guarantees the spontaneous persistence of this condition.

All that I have said reduces my present explanation to pointing out to you in what way Mme. Comte's conduct always prevented the moral union which I had hoped would arise from our legal union.

Generally the source of this sad anomaly consists in the very unusual character of this anti-feminine type.

Always posessing great intelligence, and formerly great energy, she is almost entirely devoid of that tenderness which constitutes the principal attribute of her sex. Since our fatal marriage of the 19th February, 1825, her conduct, though very licentious, never evinced, towards anyone, a true attachment. The two other altruistic instincts, veneration and benevolence, are even more foreign to her. She may affect the appearance of a Positivist, but her nature will remain purely revolutionary; her intellect never was put to any service but to construct sophisms in order to justify vicious inclinations, her character only showed itself in rebellion against all moral rules. Her unusual education only developed this bad organisation, by disposing her to see rights everywhere and duties nowhere. Such is the anomaly which, too late recognised, led to the complete

failure of the generous calculations of which my deplorable marriage was the result.

It was, in fact, without love that I committed, at twenty-seven, my only irreparable mistake, which has weighed so heavily upon all my private and long trammelled my public life. Not considering myself handsome, nor even agreeable, yet tormented by a keen longing for affection, I chose a wife who ought to have loved me from heartfelt gratitude, a gratitude based on so exceptional a marriage, although we were equally poor. If this legitimate hope had been realised, I felt myself disposed to attach myself completely. My calculations would probably have been borne out with any other woman. To give the whole extent of my fault, I add that, committed as it was without passion, it was also committed without the consent of my family, whose prejudices were justly opposed to it.

On the other side the calculation was much less noble, without being more successful. Madame Comte always looked to transform me into an academic machine, gaining for her money, titles, and places. She who seems to wish to devote her old age to Positivism thwarted with all her power its first elaboration. She never appreciated it before the just and striking tribute to it of which you were so worthily the immortal mouthpiece; if her inveterate want of principle enables her to see in it, even at the present day, anything more than a new part to play, such as was formerly devotion for those like her. However that may be, her nature, destitute of kindness, makes her always attribute, in others, condescension to weakness. Her leading propensity to a complete and coarse domination was then fostered, as a result of my generous conduct, by the hope of mastering a character which she misapprehended. Each fresh concession only deepened this mistake, perhaps it still exists, in spite of experience. Such being her view, the total absence of moral principles allowed her to employ, as her natural method of government, the most extreme alternatives, often carried to the point of complete desertion, when I resisted her culpable proceedings. If she had only been impure, I should perhaps always have condoned it; but as she showed herself without heart and without any delicacy of feeling, I could only end by despising her.

I must here pass over in silence secondary freaks, limited to living for weeks at a time in furnished lodgings on the least pretext. Instances of this would be almost beyond count from the very

beginning of our keeping house together. As for the more important separations, lasting longer and involving pecuniary arrangements, my letter of the 10th January, 1847, has already informed you that there were three before the separation which was irrevocable.

The first took place in March, 1826, after a year of marriage. Its moral reaction on me combined with an excess of intellectual exertion to bring about my great cerebral attack. Although this incorrigible woman has never brought herself sincerely to confess to a grave wrong, yet I attribute to her remorse her excellent conduct at that time, in a very difficult situation. It is the only truly honourable period in the whole life of Madame Comte.* Her first separation was thus worthily at an end when I recovered my health.

The second took place in 1833 ; it lasted four or five months, in Paris and in the country, with no other real reason for it but the need of unbridled liberty and vexation at not being allowed arbitrary authority. This time, although I felt less, I was good natured enough to request her to return, and it was at length granted contemptuously.

The third formal separation took place in 1838, as a consequence of my just objections to discreditable visits. It lasted only three weeks. But I then made no effort to bring it to an end. Although I accepted with too great indulgence the spontaneous return of Mme. Comte, I announced to her my determination to treat as irrevocable any fresh action of the kind. I even gave an attitude of firmness to my authority as a husband, which her undisciplined nature had required much earlier, and might at least have evinced to her the reality of the above mentioned decision.

After four more years of unseemly daily strife, an indescribable course of conduct drove Madame Comte to her fourth and final abandonment of the common roof. During the six months before her departure, I loyally fulfilled my duty by exerting myself to divert her from such a course, which had, however, become essential to my tranquility, the only good to which my secret hopes then aspired. I often repeated my previous declaration that this time her return would never be asked nor even accepted. But her mad presumption prevented her from heeding this

*See however *Notice sur l'œuvre et la vie d'Auguste Comte* Dr. Robinet (3rd edition) and *Address on the Centenary of the Birth of Auguste Comte* (19 January, 1898), by Dr. Congreve.

true advice, persuaded as she was that I could not remain three months without consenting to anything to end my loneliness. This last experience offered a characteristic feature which will give you some idea of my unparalleled position.

You are aware that I was then writing the general conclusions which formed the capital difficulty of my fundamental work, the work in which science, at last completed, thus acquired the irrevocable dignity of a true philosophy. This supreme labour required the utmost moral calm, for the concentration of all my mental powers, with a view to its worthy termination, before the approaching return of my duty as examiner, which always begins on the 20th July. It was therefore agreed that Madame Comte should not leave till the 1st August in order that such a moral shock might not coincide with the great intellectual crisis. However, Madame Comte wished, on the 15th June, to leave me immediately, in order, she dared to say, not to miss a pretty apartment, with a convenient garden attached. That day was a terrible one for me, and I felt myself on the point of relapsing, in 1842, into the frightful cerebral episode of 1826, through an analogous concurrence of disturbing influences. I only avoided this new shock by energetically refusing to give this unworthy woman any portion of the sum agreed upon until it became due on the 1st August. Then she waited for the term originally fixed, declaiming, however, against my *tyranny*.

Such was, in many other cases, the conduct of her to whom I had the misfortune to give my name. During seventeen years of cohabitation, I thus often entertained thoughts of suicide, and I should probably have yielded to them, notwithstanding my firm principles, had not the deep bitterness of my domestic situation been surmounted by the increasing consciousness of my social mission. My philosophical labours were greatly hampered by them. If my great work cost me twelve years, it was not solely from its inherent difficulties and my pecuniary embarrassments. I estimate the influence on it of my domestic troubles at a good third. My three last volumes, forming the principal portion, were accomplished in less than four years; because my late-aroused energy had, since 1838, rendered my home less unendurable. The whole work, therefore, might have taken only eight years instead of twelve, had I always enjoyed this semi-tranquillity. Far from offering me the domestic support which generally assists great intellectual labour, my home ceaselessly

offered me a most decided obstacle, which was not the least difficult to surmount. She who now affects to appreciate my philosophical merit, felt it so little in November, 1837, that she ventured to declare to me before two witnesses, of whom one is still living, how far she placed Armand Marrast above me. Since that poor creature has fallen into discredit, she has emphatically denied this strange preference. But, although it was hatred that inspired the declaration, it was frivolity alone could make her think of it. Become a Positivist at the age when Madame de Maintenon became devout, this lady will not find me more credulous as to one of these conversions than to the other. She never appreciated my intellect, but I especially blame her for having even less understood my heart, after seven years of married life ; while my sainted companion judged me principally under the latter aspect after a few months of very incomplete intercourse.

This summary explanation is essentially the equivalent of that which I lately laid before our colleagues. I thus end the painful statement imperatively demanded by a sad challenge, the source of which was the vain pretention to preclude me from any worthy public expression of my just philosophic gratitude to my angelic Clotilde.

The valued personal gratitude which you are good enough to express to me for the moral and religious development of Positivism, will soon extend to the holy involuntary influence which, regenerating my heart, procured me the privilege of a second public life. If, previous to my great publication of July, you should desire to peruse the dedication after the funeral, which in 1846 sketched out the Religion of Humanity, I could communicate it to you at once, with the characteristic Preface in which I have lately assigned my reasons for it. This double introduction is, in fact, already in type, and, indeed, struck off : I now possess a copy in sheets. You would there see with what reserve I give the public a glimpse of my domestic fatality, of which this letter gives you at least a general idea. In my private life I have never hated anyone, least of all the unhappy woman who will always bear my name ; but her whole conduct towards me does not permit me to esteem her. It is true that Dante sang of his Beatrice without making any allusion to his own marriage ; but his wife was irreproachable, though unsympathetic. My case is not so favourable ; and yet in regard to it I shall preserve in public all the reserve possible, even if I survive the guilty woman.

If her conduct had been such as Mme. Littré's, I should never have placed my affections elsewhere. Notwithstanding her misconduct, I did not think myself even authorised to do so as long as she remained beneath the conjugal roof. It was not till two years after her irrevocable desertion that my heart, thus exceptionally kept virgin till forty-seven years of age, sought the chaste emotions which have given me a new life now for six years, and to which death soon gave greater fixity as well as purity. But this inward consolation, the continuous source of the noblest improvements, disposes me of itself to forget a painful past, the memory of which would, moreover, disturb the few years of full cerebral vigour which still remain to me for the worthy service of the true Great Being. I feel, better than my beloved Dante, that one must have tasted Lethe before drinking deep of Eunoë. It is therefore against my will that I retrace my long sufferings, and I trust that I do so now for the last time. As early as 1842, I expressed to my old friend how entirely I was disposed henceforth to look on my domestic misfortune as having had for its sole result the increase of my yearly contributions by three thousand francs (subsequently reduced to two thousand). Such was in a still greater degree my disposition after my moral regeneration. If the culpable woman, renouncing an insensate rivalry, ends by observing a becoming silence, she shall find on my part a similar attitude, tempered even by the natural solicitude which I shall not cease to feel for her from a distance. But under new provocations, my profound love of peace will never prevent me from meeting with dignity the war, and I will carry it, if necessary, to the obtaining of a decree for judicial separation, in accordance with the notice which ended my letter of the 10th January, 1847.

Ever yours

AUGUSTE COMTE

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

P.S.—I give you full authority to allow Mme. Comte to read this letter if you think proper. But I will not receive any recrimination which might result from such a communication. A fraternal explanation to my principal colleague is all that I have in view; there is no question of an enquiry or discussion, which I never permitted to Mme. Comte, while leaving her full liberty to state the case in her own way.

Copy of my Three Letters to Marshal Soult

The first, of the 25th January, 1844 (sent on the 30th) ; the second, of the 30th May, 1844 (sent two days afterwards) ; the third, of the 19th December, 1844 (sent the following day) ; then the copy of my Letter of the 16th July, 1848 : To the Citizen Minister De Lamoricière.

I

TO MARSHAL THE DUKE OF DALMATIA, MINISTER OF WAR
(*True Copy*)

Paris, Thursday, 25 January, 1844
(Sent the 30th)

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE

When, in 1837, I was appointed, for the first time, examiner of candidates for admission to the Polytechnic school, I was not ignorant that, in accordance with the fundamental ordinance of the 30th October, 1832, the office was for the future to be subject to annual re-election. Nevertheless, I did not hesitate immediately to renounce the greater part of the advantages which my teaching Mathematics procured me, with the view of diminishing, as far as possible, the inconvenience arising from the objections to which I should naturally be liable, in the Paris examinations, in respect of my own pupils : hence of the various preparatory schools where I taught before my nomination, I from that time only kept the one from which there were fewest candidates. I could only suppose, in fact, that this new character of a temporary appointment had been given to the office of examiner as it had already been to the office of under-teacher of Analysis and Mechanics, which I hold at the Polytechnic school since 1832, solely to furnish a regular means of easily excluding an examiner who should have ceased

adequately to fulfil the indispensable conditions of ability, or of morality. Certain never to deserve a complaint of the kind, and moreover attaching, in general, little importance to forms, this new position seemed to me to offer, so long as my duties were well discharged, nearly as much stability as that of my three colleagues, who had previously been appointed for life. Hitherto, in fact, it is in this light that by common consent this temporary character has been viewed, under which my office of examiner has been continued to me through six successive years, with no more difficulty than that of under-teacher. But when nominating me for the seventh time, on the 19th of May last, the council of instruction of the Polytechnic school decided that the director of studies (the late M. Coriolis) should notify to me, by way of warning, the intention shown, on this occasion, by some members, of giving for the future a different character to the annual right of appointment, although this intention had not occasioned any formal vote. M. Coriolis warned me then, in the name of the Council, that a considerable portion of the body seemed now disposed to change every year the person called to these offices, without any ground of complaint, and with the sole object of systematically testing an innovation which had been proposed as useful to the service. As such a measure must deeply affect the sense generally attached hitherto to the rule in force, so as to destroy the natural, though tacit, conditions upon which I originally accepted the position, I find myself on my part, M. le Ministre, compelled to ask you to modify in the inverse sense the actual rule, by restoring to the office of examiner the stability which it had before 1832, and which it still retains in the case of my three colleagues, since I am still the only person to whom the principle of annual election has actually been applied.

It would be superfluous in this place to insist at length on the evident superiority, as regards this important function, of fixity of tenure, when compared with the annual renewal which apparently it is wished to introduce, allowing always that, in general, there exists no measure, were it even conceived almost haphazard, which does not offer under some one partial aspect, some real advantage. The office in question requires, by its nature, a very delicate combination of intellectual and moral qualities, a combination sufficiently rare soon to render impracticable the method thus proposed, from the impossibility of finding the twelve or sixteen properly qualified persons which, as a minimum, its effective

application to the four places of examiner would presuppose. Besides, the men most apt for such an office are hardly ever likely at once to perform its duties with the perfection which is to be desired, however great their zeal, from the want of sufficient special experience, with which no personal superiority can really dispense. The proposed innovation is radically opposed to this evident condition: it tends to get rid of an officer at the very moment when he can begin to fulfil his mission properly. By greatly increasing the existing instability of these offices, this project tends, moreover, to make them often despised by those who would be most worthy of them. It lessens to the utmost the indispensable responsibility, no less moral than intellectual, a responsibility which would thus become almost illusory for the members then called in succession to this office, which each would perhaps exercise only once during his whole career, or at least would only resume at long and indeterminate intervals, pretty much as jurymen. This multiplicity and instability would greatly increase the inconvenience, already inherent in my present position, which results from the combination, thus scarcely to be avoided, of the duties of examiner with those of teacher of a portion of the candidates.

The regular stability, which I propose to restore, evidently offers, on the contrary, fundamental advantages, and the dangers attaching to it can be greatly lessened, it seems to me, by the method which I am about to have the honour of submitting to you. Our duties as examiners for admission are very analogous to those of judges, and the weighty social considerations on which rests the immovability of judges apply equally to the former. In both cases, there is needed a rare moral energy if the duty of a temporary functionary is never to yield to the pressure of those upon whom his precarious lot depends, as when, for example, it is a question of rejecting a candidate who is a relation or protégé of one of his annual electors. When a life tenure was given to the principal examiners for the final examination of the Polytechnic school, the same reasons were equally valid, nay were more valid, for extending this guarantee of independence to the examiners for admission, who not only decide in addition the order of merit of the candidates, but also in reality, in average years, have to reject three-fourths of those whom they examine. If the existing annual tenure were really of advantage to the service, similar considerations would require with even greater force that the

duties of professor, which, at least, do not require a high moral energy, should be dealt with in the same manner : no one, however, would venture to propose this, without there being any other genuine reason for the difference, save this perhaps that the savants consulted, in 1832, upon this removability had been professors and never examiners. Lastly, the appointment for life allows of its being required of the examiners that they debar themselves from all preparatory tuition, provided that the actual stipend be sufficiently increased to enable officers without private fortune to dispense with this means of support. This would put an end to the kind of false position which is a result at present, in my case, of the existence of an inevitable superiority of standing in regard to professors whose colleague I am at other moments.

As for the reasonable fears the re-attaching permanence to the office of examiner may excite, I need take no account here of such as relate to the extreme cases of breach of trust or incompetence, which admit and require no other remedy than the firmness of a wise administration. No office whatever can ever be an inviolable property, and the irremovability of judges, for instance, in no degree interferes with the power of removing such as should become really unworthy of their post. These exceptions put aside, the only serious danger of a life appointment consists in the great difficulty, and often impossibility, of judging properly, before trial, of practical competence for such functions, which might consequently be confided for an indefinite period to incompetent holders. But it is easy, I think, satisfactorily to meet this grave objection, by confiding these functions at first only for three years, during which the value of the functionary can be properly appreciated, permanence being granted subsequently only as the result of the trial.

On these various grounds, I feel bound, Monsieur le Ministre, to suggest to you, in opposition to the scheme which, on the 19th May, 1843, was laid before the Polytechnic council to make the following modifications in the ordinance of the 30th October, 1832, which I venture to draw up in the form of regulations with the sole object of being brief :

1. The examiners for admission into the Polytechnic school shall be henceforth permanent, just as are the principal examiners in the final examination, and as they were before 1832 ;

2. Their salary shall be made equal to that of the last-named examiners, whose duties, without being more important or more difficult, are much less painful ;

3. As a consequence the office will again become incompatible with taking any part in preparatory instruction ;

4. Each one of these functionaries shall at first be appointed, in ordinary cases, only for three years, under the title of *provisional* examiner ; fixity of tenure will then be conferred upon him directly by the minister, if the probation have been sufficiently in his favour ;

5. To obviate any abuse arising from the prolongation of the office beyond the age which is suited for it, these examiners *may* be called upon to retire, when they have completed their sixtieth year.

Hitherto, Monsieur le Ministre, in the foregoing summary considerations, I have discussed the measure proposed, the 19th of May last, to the Council of Instruction of the Polytechnic school, as though this systematic annual change of examiners had been devised to ameliorate an important public service. But I must now have the courage to point out to you, on this matter the whole truth, whatever fresh dangers it may bring upon me, by informing you that this project has really been conceived only in order to gratify unworthy private passions, the indication of which will show you to what extent various members of this corporation may abuse an annual right, which was certainly given them with a very different object. Forced, with this object, to detail to you certain personal facts, I will endeavour to limit them to the strictly indispensable.

In the sixth and last volume, published in 1842, of a work upon the philosophy of the sciences, I was led to blame, in my capacity of philosopher, the spirit and tendencies which our learned bodies more and more display as regards their exercise of the power which the generous confidence of the French government has step by step conferred upon them, as to the principal scientific appointments, which previously emanated exclusively from itself. Contrary to existing prejudices, I ventured to regret that the administration had thus stripped itself of a right which the true public interest ought to have prevented it from confiding, prematurely, to a class in which the spirit of comprehensiveness and the feeling of duty are as yet too little developed for it to be really worthy of any direct power, even less over persons than

over things. Lastly, I felt bound also to give a more specific character to this general appreciation, by explicitly deploring the fatal influence, long wielded at the Polytechnic school, by M. Arago.

This distinguished personage brought to bear on me on this occasion an unheard-of act of literary oppression, shrouding himself from any legal prosecution behind my publisher, who was unfortunately dependent upon him, and at that time was his passive agent. Thus compelled, in my demand for justice, to deal only with this subordinate instrument, I obtained from the Tribunal of Commerce of Paris, by a sentence given on the 29th December, 1842, the full reparation which I was bound to claim, in the common interest of all independent authors. Some days before the public discussion of this grave matter, which I conducted in person, I was directly threatened, if I allowed myself to name M. Arago, with the loss of my position at the Polytechnic school, more particularly as regarded my post of examiner, with reference to which, if I ventured to speak out, confidence was felt that my next annual re-election could be prevented. I paid no attention to these blameworthy threats, confining myself to stating them to the tribunal, and to the public, in the hearing on the 15th December, 1842, when I argued the case. At the usual time of re-election M. Liouville, the principal supporter of M. Arago's animosity against me, used, in fact, all his influence to persuade this corporation to withdraw from me at forty-five years of age, after six years of honourable discharge of it, an office which from my poverty is at present indispensable to me. This re-election, which in every previous year had only given occasion for a sort of formality, over in a few minutes, led, in 1843, without its being possible to find any fault with my service, to three weeks of animated discussion, which involved three long and stormy sittings of this assembly. Forced at last to yield to the impartial majority of the council, M. Liouville next bethought himself, in the definitive meeting of the 19th of last May, of proposing, before the vote which concerned me, this plan of annual renewal of the examiners, which I have discussed above, and had never been hinted at so long as my enemies had preserved some hope of my direct dismissal. Everything leads one to think, I venture to say it, that if M. Liouville should thus succeed in getting rid of me in 1844, and in substituting for me one of his creatures, he would then find excellent reasons for returning to the

existing system, and even for demanding in favour of the new functionary a permanence which I know that in principle he approves. However that may be, I do not fear to affirm that the strange project, the main defects of which I have above pointed out, had for its sole real aim in its author's eyes, the destruction of my position, although other members have subsequently been quite conscientiously attracted to it.

In the situation which I have just described, I had no resource, Monsieur le Ministre, save to appeal, as I now do, to your high protection, naturally extended to every officer who, without deserving any reproach, finds himself the object of the animosity of the powerful. If the irremovability which I ask for seem to you, as to me, really conformable to the public interest, the foregoing statement forms a strong motive for hastening on its introduction, in order to shelter me from the unjust attacks which will recur at the next election, which generally takes place in April. In case you do not agree, I have to request that the step which I now take may be kept as secret as possible ; for it is evidently of a nature greatly to increase the animosity of which I am the object, and perhaps even to extend it, by an impulse too common in corporations, to some of those who have hitherto defended me. However, if you feel bound to submit the whole affair to a real official examination, I feel myself quite ready, whatever your final decision may be, to maintain directly against any opponents, the accuracy of all the assertions made in this letter, adding, moreover, all the suitable explanations. For the rest, the energetic measures you have lately adopted for tempering the excessive authority of the Polytechnic Council, affords me the hope of a favourable hearing, as it shows that your eyes are already opened, in general, to the abuses common to these over-rated societies, in which the passions and prejudices of the several scientific coteries exercise at present so extensive a sway.

Not having the honour M. le Ministre, of being personally known to you, I must beg you to be so good as above all things to obtain decisive information as to myself. Specially attached, for the last twelve years, to the service of the Polytechnic school, I have successively served there under three chiefs : first, General Tholosé, then General Vaillant, and now General Boilleau, together with their seconds in command, Colonels Espéronnier, and Guillemain. I venture to rely upon the favourable personal appreciation of all these functionaries, who will also be able to give on other

points the testimony which concerns me, and which I cannot now get from the two directors of the studies with which I have been connected (the late MM. Dulong and Coriolis), whose judgments of me they can report.

Pray accept, Monsieur le Ministre, the respectful homage of your obedient servant,

AUGUSTE COMTE

II

TO FIELD-MARSHAL THE DUKE OF DALMATIA, MINISTER OF WAR
(*True Copy*)

Paris, Thursday, 30 May, 1844
(Despatched 1 June)

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE

My letter of the 30th January last, which you promised to examine with care, and which I beg you to have re-submitted to you, has sufficiently explained to you the source and nature of the odious persecution which M. Liouville has raised against me within the Council of Instruction of the Polytechnic school, to gratify the unwearying hostility of M. Arago. You know that the letter in question was chiefly intended to invoke the tutelary intervention of the administration against the imminent recurrence in due season of the unfair opposition to which my usual re-election as examiner for admissions had been exposed under these circumstances last year. No special precaution having been taken, my enemies have succeeded in completing this year, the spoliation which they had then vainly attempted. Notwithstanding the continued and unanimous zealous support of the three real chiefs of the Polytechnic school (the two Commandants and the Director of Studies), who defended my just rights with as much energy as all their several predecessors during the twelve years of my service at the school, the majority of the Council of Instruction has just voted, Monday, the 27th May, a list of candidates from which my name is altogether absent, and this, it must be remembered, without any fault found with my discharge of the office which I have held during the last seven years. Thus

takes effect the spiteful declaration of M. Arago, who, at the commencement of this conflict, had proclaimed his intention to pursue me without respite until my position was destroyed. When I accepted these duties in 1837, I felt bound to renounce, in the interests of such a service, the greater part of the means of subsistence which I then derived from mathematical teaching, and I cannot now suddenly recover, so that, if your high intervention does not prevent the carrying out of this iniquitous spoliation, my total want of private fortune will compel me henceforth, without any misconduct on my part, laboriously to re-commence, at the age of forty-six, the uncertain career of a young man.

I have already discussed, in principle, in my letter of the 30th January, the systematic form which my enemies have sought to give to a purely individual persecution, in the guise of a so-called plan of trying, in future, a new examiner every year; I had no difficulty in showing how fatal the plan would be to so important a service. But even on the supposition that this strange proposal was sincere, it is at once evident that the Council has no right thus to encroach upon the ministerial privileges, by so radical a change in the sense invariably attached to the existing rule during the six consecutive years of its practical application; for, by handing over by such alteration this duty on each occasion to a fresh officer, a change would really be introduced, without your knowledge, of more serious import to the public than when the ordinance of 1832 made temporary a post previously permanent. If, besides, the Council considered itself authorised to adopt such a measure, it should at least not apply it without a grave and special discussion of the principle involved, considered apart from any actual individual case: now I venture to assert that such preliminary discussion has never taken place.

Lastly, allowing the innovation, a just invariable custom ought to have forbidden any retrospective application of it; its application ought to have been postponed to the period when a fresh person should be called to the office: as was done when it was made temporary, the ordinance of 1832 making an exception in favour of the actual incumbent and respecting the permanence which had hitherto attached to it. These three reasons evidently confirm the judgment I expressed on the plan proposed in my letter of the 30th January, when I showed that it was solely intended, by its author, to destroy my personal position, which it was acknowledged could not be openly and fairly attacked.

On the strength of the facts known to me, taken as a whole, *I did not hesitate, Monsieur le Ministre, to accuse to you the majority of the Council of Instruction of the Polytechnic School of having betrayed its trust, in its sitting of the 27th May, by perverting a right of annual re-election to the gratification of private animosities altogether foreign to my public service, and I undertake to prove that this act has only given effect, through the agency of M. Liouville, to the culpable threats of M. Arago, as against me mentioned in a letter of the 30th January.* I request, accordingly, that you will be so good as immediately to order an *official inquiry* into all that relates to my re-election in 1843, and my non-re-election in 1844, and that, till the result of the said enquiry be known, you will suspend any decision whatever as to the new nomination which has been just submitted to you.

If, as I am firmly convinced, this enquiry prove the justice of my accusation, I claim from your wise firmness the immediate suppression of a privilege which this body would be thus seen to have unworthily abused. The subsequent conduct of the Polytechnic Council, possibly sufficiently corrected by this energetic measure, would further decide whether it be or be not necessary to extend the same guarantee to all temporary nominations, and ultimately even to those which are permanent. It would be of great importance, no doubt, to the true public interests in all cases, that the administration should now again take entirely into its own hands functions which it has too generously made over to special corporations, bodies in which, under the vain pretext of competence, which for the most part is but apparent, there are daily seen, without any real independence, arbitrary decisions, exempted practically from all responsibility, and almost always determined by the passions or the prejudices of the various dominant cliques. But, however wholesome even now would be such a return to true administrative principles, it is better, p rhaps, to work it out only by degrees, in proportion as the defects of the existing system may become undeniable for all impartial observers. This is why, Monsieur le Ministre, I confine myself to-day to the proposal that you should revert by a *special ordinance* to your own free and direct nomination as before 1832, to the duties of examiner for admission to the Polytechnic School, whether you re-establish also the former permanence of the office, in the way I pointed out in a letter of January 30th, or think you ought to continue to leave it subject to an annual nomina-

tion, a nomination thus emanating exclusively from the administration, whose justice would inspire me with the sense of full security, so long as I worthily fulfilled the moral and intellectual conditions which such an office demands. Serious as this change is, there is time enough to institute it this very year, by restoring to me in due form, the office of which I have just been unworthily despoiled, without in any way delaying the usual opening of the competition.

Such a measure is at bottom, Monsieur le Ministre, merely the indispensable continuation to the wise regulations introduced, last November, to modify the method previously in use for the various Polytechnic nominations: at least it would be but a second step in the same direction. In fact, the action of which I am to-day the victim clearly proves that, considering the public morality of these corporations, the obligation to submit a list of three candidates is not enough to protect removable officers from the animosities of the reigning cliques, which was one of the two main objects of this judicious innovation; as for its other aim, which was to prevent the forced appointment of unsuitable candidates, it would be scarcely more difficult for these societies to elude that also, by an illusory formality, by coupling, that is, two manifestly unapt candidates with the one it is wished to impose on you. Under either aspect of the case, there is really no efficient remedy, save to withdraw a power of which experience has shown these bodies to be as yet not worthy.

Over and above my just personal rights, the evident interest of an important public service compels me then to persist in such a demand. For, if it let the injustice plotted against me be consummated without opposition, the administration would inevitably nullify all the honourable efforts that it has already made to withdraw the Polytechnic school from the control of the scientific coteries; it would thus hand over again this great establishment to the disastrous secret omnipotence of M. Arago, by sacrificing a functionary against whom no charge has ever been found possible except that he has incurred the implacable enmity of this powerful personage by an energetic philosophical protest against the deplorable influence which he obtains from the dangerous administrative authority now conceded to bodies of savants. Under the direct weight of such a precedent, what real independence could my successor, be he who he may, ever exert as against the imperious solicitations of several of those on whom his annual

destiny depends? Is there any reason, moreover, to look at the present day for an energetic morality, the first condition of the office, in an examiner who, by the very mode of gaining his appointment, would have shown himself essentially destitute of all true delicacy, by soliciting actively, or at any rate by accepting consciously a succession obviously resulting from an odious spoliation, to which he will thus have necessarily been a party? With what confidence can such a beginning inspire families in the scrupulous justice of the selections, and what respect can it evoke from young men already so disposed to insubordination?

Finally, I venture to say, Monsieur le Ministre, that equity does not permit you to refuse me the solemn enquiry which I ask, since my personal honour is at stake. The impartial portion of even the cultivated public, too ignorant of the unworthy manoeuvres of our scientific coteries, will naturally imagine, unless there be some full and special conviction, that my present non-re-election, after seven years of continued service, is the consequence of some grave infraction, intellectual, or perhaps rather moral, of the regular duties of my office. I have the more reason to dread this in that my powerful enemies have already shown, by certain undeniable attempts, to what an extent their far from scrupulous morality would easily dispose them to endeavour covertly to veil, under cowardly calumnies, the infamous iniquity which they have lately consummated. This is why, Monsieur le Ministre, I shall not weary of claiming, from your high justice, a really decisive enquiry, and even after this, the same motives would compel me, if I did not obtain true reparation, to employ in succession, with all due energy, all the several honourable means for fully establishing, in the eyes of all upright and sensible men, that my actual deprivation is solely due to reprehensible private animosities, notwithstanding that I have always loyally discharged my public duties. Doubtless no one could justly refuse me such a satisfaction.

Deign to accept, Monsieur le Ministre, the respectful homage of your devoted servant,

AUGUSTE COMTE
Examiner of the Polytechnic School

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, near the Odéon

III

TO FIELD MARSHAL, THE DUKE OF DALMATIA, MINISTER OF WAR
(*True Copy*)

Paris, Thursday, 19 *December*, 1844
(Sent the following day)

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE

The Council for the right administration of the Polytechnic School having formally made itself a party, Monday, December 18th, to the attempt at my exclusion, which was initiated the 27th May last by the Council of Instruction, it appears to me that your protective justice must now have recourse to the decisive measure proposed in a letter of May 30th, suppressing for the future all right of presentation to the office of examiner for admission, an office to be conferred consequently by the direct and sole action of the Minister. The conscientious efforts of the two commandants of the school and of the Director of Studies were nevertheless actively seconded by the worthy General Vaillant, a former head of the school, and by several other very honourable members; they were especially supported by the weighty suffrage of the most eminent of living geometricians (M. Poincot), the only one of the assembly who has a real personal experience of the examinations for admission. But all was insufficient to restrain, in the new Council, the natural tendency which carries away such bodies, particularly at the present day, to make common cause against the central authority. This last vote, unforeseen by everyone, even by my indefatigable enemies, is all the more characteristic in that it is in notorious opposition to the high reprobation which you officially expressed on the subject of the first attack, when you explicitly refused, by your letter of July 15th, to take any step for replacing me. The spirit of disorder which, in our day, has penetrated more or less everywhere, appears to have disposed certain members who have a singular conception of independence, to support on principle, without any personal feeling, the procedure of my enemies, in order not to appear, in defending me, to yield to this legitimate decision of a Minister.

It is not, then, in this case simply a question of preventing a blameless officer from losing, by a majority of one, without even being heard, a position justly acquired by seven consecutive years of an always loyal and honourable discharge of his duties;

whilst the exclusion, even when notoriously deserved, of a mere pupil can only be legally proposed by a majority of at least two-thirds, and that after his free personal defence ! On a wider and more important view of the matter, the question is, while offering opposition to this particular injustice, to preserve the new Polytechnic system from the serious blow with which it is threatened by a vote by which the new council of direction voluntarily confirms against your formal judgment, the most iniquitous act of the old ruling body, notwithstanding the blame spontaneously expressed, on this subject, by all honourable men, during the interval of six months.

All men of judgment and really independent mind, who take interest in the Polytechnic school, applauded the salutary purpose which inspired the ordinance of reorganisation, meant above all to withdraw this valuable establishment from the pernicious ascendancy of the scientific coteries. While joining, with special gratitude, in this just homage, I still regretted that the government had yet too far yielded to existing prejudices, by granting too much authority, at least as regards persons, to the new governing body, although better constituted than the old. Its superiority is mainly due to a judicious characteristic admixture of practical officers with the purely scientific members. But though these two constituents have been made equal in number officially, they cannot be really equal in school influence, and the balance will habitually incline to that one of the two which tends indefinitely to extend the scientific power as against the one which is by its nature disposed to respect the just preponderance of the central authority. This danger is all the more to be feared in that the practical portion of the Council, in itself less homogeneous and less compact than the theoretical portion, lacks, in general, confidence in its own wisdom, and too often is itself in part swayed by the prejudices which prevail now-a-days as to the exclusive competence of savants in a question of scientific administration. Moreover, no general precaution has been taken to ensure the presence, in numbers which could tell, of this essential portion of the assembly, and it is naturally less disposed than the other to regularity of attendance ; so that a deliberation might be legal without any delegate from the public services taking part in it : this would at once cause the Governing Body to degenerate into a purely scientific assembly, as it was under the former system.

In accordance with this estimate of the position, I do not hesitate to assert that the measure proposed above forms the only really efficient remedy for the defect in organisation, indicated by the injustice from which I suffer. You can, no doubt, Monsieur le Ministre, as a first step, avail yourself, on this subject, as regards the Council of Reform, of your inalienable right to require a new nomination, whilst you order them, if they persist in discarding me, to draw up a precise accusation against me, as you did six months ago with the Council of Instruction. The exercise of this right has now become all the more appropriate, inasmuch as this new vote of exclusion is expressly contrary to article 27 of the ordinance of reorganisation, which reserves exclusively to the minister any such dismissal. But although this course might have its utility as a preliminary, were it only to display in its true character a blind implacability, its recent inadequacy in respect of the Council of Instruction, hardly allows the hope that it will now be adequate as regards the Council of Reform. Even supposing the delegates of the public services, warned by the surprise of Monday last, specially to feel the necessity of coming to counter-balance the pernicious influence of the scientific coteries, and so were to determine in my favour the second deliberation, experience and reflection would still combine to awaken the fear that in every successive year a similar danger would recur, so long as the existing system is insufficiently modified. For the persecution of which I am the object is not solely due to active private enmities, it is referable in a higher degree to the system of my philosophical principles, which have led me to blame on rational grounds the vicious spirit which in the present day directs the study of the sciences, most particularly the mathematical sciences, and as a consequence to deplore the disastrous power which the unreflecting generosity of the French government has, in our days, given to a class which is not yet worthy of it, from its want of the requisite largeness of view and loftiness of sentiment. It is this inevitable and permanent discordance which, under the existing system, will always endanger my position at the Polytechnic, now that the new Council has, as the old, once suffered personal disputes, altogether foreign to my public employment, to bear upon a right of annual re-election, the sole legal aim of which was to furnish a regular means of at once discarding an officer who should have

really ceased adequately to satisfy the various conditions, intellectual and moral, indispensable to my office of examiner.

On duly weighing these various motives, I venture to hope, Monsieur le Ministre, that you will soon recognise the necessity of at length returning, on this grave occasion, to the true administrative principles which require that special corporations, above all scientific corporations, should only be granted a purely consultative influence, no executive authority ever being given to them, seeing their inevitable want of all true personal responsibility, which in such bodies is lost by being confounded with a vague collective responsibility, nearly always illusory. Let the directing authority ask of such bodies information and advice, not, however, without being on its guard against the prejudices and passions which are natural to them, but never let it be bound by any of their suggestions; then it will fully utilise, to the constant advantage of the public service, an influence which otherwise employed most often tends to disturb it. Even now the new Polytechnic organisation admits this fundamental principle in all that concerns things on which the Council has only a consultative voice, which in no way binds the minister. Why should it be otherwise in respect of persons, where the influence of passions and prejudices is much more difficult to avoid?

And yet, Monsieur le Ministre, I feel that the cautious treatment which is provisionally required by powerful tendencies, however vicious, scarcely allows the introduction at present of this salutary practice into all the Polytechnic nominations. But if your prudent firmness thinks it right at first to limit its application to a single case, reasons of unquestionable force will easily make it clear to all right-thinking minds why an exceptional practice has been tried with reference to the examiners for admission. For their office, as compared with all the others, is essentially outside the Polytechnic school, and its conditions are much more moral than scientific, so that, taken as a whole, they can be properly appreciated by the Minister alone. The constant obligation which this post by its nature imposes of rejecting about three-quarters of the candidates examined, manifestly calls for a high degree of special independence, which can hardly be satisfactorily reconciled with the individual subjection of the functionary to the irresponsible votes of various persons often interested in unfair preferences. Finally, the temporary character of the duty is another reason for making its annual confirmation

depend exclusively on a highly-placed, responsible power, more free than any others from disturbing impulses.

Whilst indicating these new considerations in favour of a measure which alone is decisive in my eyes, I feel bound also, Monsieur le Ministre, to insist on the preliminary enquiry which I asked for, May 30th, in reference to the whole of this grave affair. This enquiry appears to me to have become still more necessary now, to establish the fact that, notwithstanding the change of council, the exclusion pronounced against me is only the simple carrying into effect of the blameable menaces of M. Arago, mentioned in my letter of January 30th. Although this celebrated personage, and his principal agent, M. Liouville, are not now members of the Council of Reform, their clique indirectly retains therein a powerful influence, and is besides directly represented by M. Mathieu, who was, two years ago, one of the active instruments of these threats.

It is true that your full conviction is already formed, nay, was even officially declared, by your letter of July 15th, as to the injustice of which I am the object, still the enquiry which I claim will not be useless, as it will supply grounds with the impartial public for the energetic measure which I solicit. The sanction lately given to this iniquity by a body with which I had never had the least dispute, and which naturally appeared, even in my eyes, disposed to do justice to me, might, without this special discussion, give a sort of consistence to the calumnious insinuations which unscrupulous enemies will doubtless employ to palliate the spoliation. This fear becomes all the more natural as there has been an affectation of a certain impartiality towards me, in retaining me as subsidiary instructor, while discarding me as examiner ; a treatment which tends to persuade ill-informed people that my conduct is not as irreproachable in one of these offices as in the other. All the clear-sighted perceive, no doubt, that this apparent moderation depends above all on the slight pecuniary importance of the first office, while the second constitutes my chief means of livelihood : if my ruin were effected under this last aspect, it would be easy in the following year to execute in full the destructive decree pronounced by M. Arago. But many honourable men, to whose opinion I cannot be indifferent, might thus let themselves be prejudiced against me, from their imperfect knowledge of the habitual course which scientific intrigues follow.

Already penetrated, Monsieur le Ministre, with unalterable gratitude for the just firmness, so rare in our times, which you have thus far shown in my favour, I await with confidence whatever intervention your high wisdom may now consider the best adapted to prevent the consummation of an iniquity reproved in advance by your official letter of July 15th last. Despite this fresh vote, the favourable judgment with which you then honoured me is necessarily still applicable in my favour, as it had not been found possible at that time to formulate any accusation against me, and as since then I have remained in perfect calm, looking without impatience for a near and inevitable reparation. The prudence which has induced you to cause the nomination to be made on this occasion, at the beginning of the scholastic year, shows me clearly enough that you have thus reserved to yourself the six months which still remain before the competition of 1845 to introduce in a matured shape, into this important public service, the changes calculated to guarantee the necessary stability and independence, whatever resolution you may hold it your duty finally to adopt as to my formal proposal to you, *to take back henceforth, into your direct and exclusive power, the free annual nomination of all the temporary functionaries of the Polytechnic school, and above all of the examiners for admission*, allowing for your requiring, on this subject, when you shall deem it advisable, the simple preliminary advice of the Council of Administration.

Deign to accept, Monsieur le Ministre, the respectful homage of your devoted servant,

AUGUSTE COMTE

*Teacher of Analysis and Examiner for
Admission at the Polytechnic School*

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

To GENERAL DE LAMORICIERE, MINISTER OF WAR

(True Copy)

(Private)

Paris, Sunday, 16 July, 1848

CITIZEN MINISTER

I wrote to you last Monday to ask for an immediate audience, the object of which was to submit to you a very urgent request, but I have not as yet received any answer. This silence, contrary

to all ministerial usages, and particularly unexpected as towards your old master, makes me presume that already you are attempting on your own impulse to hinder the fresh injustice indicated in my letter.

To strengthen you in this disposition, I accuse to-day the Council of Reform of the Polytechnic School of a formal breach of trust, as regards its recent nomination of examiners for admission. To give greater precision to this accusation, I ought to add that the great majority of this Council appear to me in this guilty only of weakness or negligence, on the instigation of Messrs. Mathieu, Liouville and Regnault, to whom I directly impute malversation. I ask you to institute on this point a special enquiry, in which it may be open to me to prove all that I have just asserted.

You may even now see this affair in its true light, by connecting it with my spoliation of 1844, which is thus irrevocably completed. Marshal Soult, whose testimony I should not fear at need to invoke, at that time subjected the whole dispute to a searching examination, as a result of which he energetically blamed the conduct of my enemies, in an official letter of July 15th, 1844, in which he expressly refused to sanction the persecution organised against me. His noble firmness must have left, at the War Office, traces which would give you the preliminary information. The three letters which I addressed to him in 1844, January 25th, May 30th, and December 19th, would suffice to explain the nature of the struggle. If they are no longer to be found in the records of the office, there should be at the Polytechnic School the verbatim copies of them which I made at the time on the request of General Rostolan, who subsequently left them to his successor as official documents. They will explain to you the principal source of my spoliation, which, over and above culpable personal animosities, entirely foreign to my service at the Polytechnic, was essentially the penalty inflicted on my philosophic efforts to reform our absurd scientific system.

Although a vicious legality prevented the minister of 1844 from securing my position to the extent justice seemed to him to require, he did not venture to adopt the decisive measure which I proposed to him, viz., the withdrawal from the Polytechnic councils of all nominations of examiners for admission, and as a consequence their appointment directly by the minister. He thought that he had sufficiently checked the further spread of

scientific intrigues, by transferring the choice to the Council of Reform. But actual experience proves the insufficiency of this improvement. The reprehensible animosities which have pursued me for eight years can only be crushed by the measure which I again propose. It has become to-day more easy as it is at the same time more urgent, by virtue of the profound alteration in public opinion as to the prejudices in favour of scientific corporations. Such abuses may now be redressed by the central power, without exciting the empirical clamours which hampered such firmness four years ago.

This case would afford a good opportunity for a partial return to true administrative principles, which require that irresponsible assemblies, especially scientific, should only be asked for information and advice, without conferring on them any power to decide, above all as to persons. Besides the criminal intrigues of which I pledge myself to prove the existence, this act of the Polytechnic council testifies to a radical incapacity, directly injurious to an important service. For a very difficult office is thus entrusted to young men without any experience in teaching, and entirely without the knowledge of men, which is indispensable for the discharge of duties which involve the rejection of three-fourths of the competitors. Their haste to solicit, or at least wittingly to accept, a succession which is the result of a notorious spoliation, would suffice to prove that they fulfil no better the moral than the intellectual conditions of a charge, which above all requires an austere probity and immovable firmness.

The public interest compels me therefore, even more than a legitimate self defence, to persist in addressing an authority superior to pendantocratic passions, in order to point out, on this occasion, the reform needed by our Polytechnic system. It is a system which contributes greatly to the marked decline of a school already fallen below the reputation which its noble republican origin earned for it. Fallen under the control of a class without mental or moral elevation, this valuable establishment is undergoing a rapid degradation which requires the active intervention of government. I should esteem myself fortunate if my private misfortune were to arouse its indispensable attention. This is why I must lay stress on the enquiry which I ask of you, and the necessity for which I will show you in the special interview which I persist in claiming. Previously

to submitting, as a last resource, the whole of this grave affair to the supreme judgment of public opinion, I am bound to exhaust all the regular means of obtaining justice or reparation.

Health and fraternity

AUGUSTE COMTE

Author of the System of Positive Philosophy

10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince

A PHILOSOPHICAL LETTER ON THE
SOCIAL MEANING OF CHRISTIAN
BAPTISM

A Philosophical Letter on the Social meaning of Christian Baptism

Written for Madame Félicie Marie* on the occasion of the christening of her eldest son, *by the author of 'The System of Positive Philosophy.'*† Really written on Tuesday, 1 July, but only sent on the day of the christening, 28 August, 1845.

MADAME

The better to explain to you how my philosophical principles fully warrant a sincere participation in the touching ceremony which unites us to-day, allow me shortly to lay before you what I consider to be the social meaning of the institution of Baptism, in its fundamental relation to the permanent needs of Humanity, viewed independently of any theological dogma.

From this point of view we find three purposes, very distinct, but in close union : first, the incorporation of a new being into the mass of human existence ; secondly, the giving of the names that have been chosen for it ; and lastly, the consecration of the engagements which have been voluntarily contracted towards it by its spiritual parents.

Every form of society must in some shape or other exhibit the first two of these conditions, as they are necessary to mark out and give a special individuality to the new being, and, in fact, we find them in well-marked forms in the Polytheistic *régime* of antiquity. They may arise either spontaneously or under some more or less complete system, but in either case their form will always be dependent upon current opinions. Since the inevitable decline of Catholicism has for a time deprived modern society of any true spiritual organisation, the temporal power has had in its own way to take on this double function, ignoring the spiritual side of the Institution. But, however necessary such

* The sister-in-law of Clotilde de Vaux. See Note on p. 353. Also Letter 21, p. 28.

† This letter is to be found in *Lettres à Divers*, Tome II, p. 311. Its intrinsic value as well as its bearing on the relations between Auguste Comte and Clotilde suffice to explain its position here. It will be remembered that 28 August is the day of St. Augustine—Auguste Comte's Patron Saint—in the Catholic Calendar. See *Confessions*, No. 12. p 458.

interference of the state may be at present, the very undertaking is sufficient to make us feel the high importance of the ecclesiastical ceremony which we must consider as the only actually existing type of an intellectual and moral character, a character which is especially necessary in an act whereby the individual is affiliated to society.

Whilst allowing its fullest meaning to the action of the state, we can only see that it specially serves to legalise the inevitable engagements which the new being and the state tacitly contract together, relating on the part of the one to those material duties which all must undertake, on that of the other to the temporal protection which is given in exchange. On neither side is there any reference to the principles or sentiments which always underlie social existence. The special purpose of the spiritual ceremony is to fill up the immense gap in the state registration.

At bottom the promises made on behalf of the family and of society respectively, have reference to such intellectual and moral guidance as will make the new being suited to assist in the general well-being, whilst securing his own happiness. Now, such indispensable guidance must evidently result from a system which is in accordance with the opinions of society : at a time when there is really no such general doctrine, we are forced to borrow the form of this spiritual initiation from practices which were established under the dominion of the last general belief under which our civilisation has grown up. Though we do not share this belief, we yet recognise the ceremony as a whole, which gives it effect, as the only means allowed to us by the existing state of anarchy to uphold in any way whatever the invaluable tendency which there has been from the beginning to consecrate all human life. It is with this high social purpose that we are here united in the religious ceremonial, although each of us must in his heart connect this purpose with the doctrine which he considers to be henceforward the only one worthy of Humanity. Thus it is that the most fully emancipated mind can still sincerely take a part in this touching incorporation. Although the entire absence of any really universal opinions now renders such a purpose too vague and abstract, yet the imperfect indication of the conditions which it is for the future duly to satisfy must always remain preferable to a coarse materialism.

When, madame, in the next place we consider the fact that the name of a patron saint is given on this solemn occasion, we

are enabled still more easily to understand its social importance. Here, where state regulations only see a distinguishing mark of the individual, arrived at almost hap-hazard, the spiritual power recognises a means specially suitable for assisting in the entirety of the future education, by disposing the new being to a familiar acquaintance with some individual type carefully chosen from among our predecessors. This happy institution, though it cannot escape temporarily sharing in the decline of Christianity, to which its introduction is essentially due, must not be allowed, like Christianity, to pass away altogether. Its permanent utility will be seen in a more extended and more firmly established form, as soon as the final ascendancy of a really universal doctrine shall have put an end to our intellectual and moral anarchy. When the system of social incorporation shall thus be united with a system of commemoration, there will be a natural opening for the various improvements pointed out in the system of commemoration which I detailed in the philosophical letter* which I had the satisfaction of addressing to your dear sister-in-law. It is obvious that there will be a larger number of individual models from which to make a selection, and that they will be more judiciously chosen, for the selection will at once embrace, in accordance with sound historical theory, whatever names have really done honour to Humanity, without any limits such as ignorant prejudices would impose. It will then be possible also to add an improvement essential to the whole of this institution, one already confusedly anticipated among certain of the Christian sects ; for the selection of a patron, made at birth when character is still undefined, may be usefully supplemented at a suitable age by a type better adapted to its special purpose. This complementary ceremony, which appertains to the time when the new member has attained his majority, would besides tend better to satisfy the other two social purposes which baptism serves to fulfil by confirming in a more decisive manner the promises and obligations originally made and undertaken.†

Lastly, by the introduction of sponsorship we find what is certainly one of the happiest innovations which we owe to Christianity. Without dwelling further upon it we can appreciate the deep social efficacy inherent in this touching practice, which,

* See *Letter on Social Commemoration*, p. 303.

† Our Master subsequently developed this idea in the Sacrament of Admission conferred at the age of 21, and between that and Presentation at birth he inserted at the age of 14 the Sacrament of Initiation. See *Catechism of Positive Religion*.

in addition to the kind protectors which belong *naturally* to the new being, specially assures to its whole existence an additional support, the organs of which cannot but feel that they are more firmly bound by this sweet obligation, inasmuch as it is purely voluntary on their parts. The coarse materialism of the temporal authority has not even attempted in this direction to filch from the church in any way an attribute which it is even beyond its power properly to understand. It is then especially with regard to this duty that I must to-day appear before the sacerdotal functionary who is the only public organ by which society in its present state can take from me and from my dear spiritual companion the solemn engagement upon which we enter with so much pleasure, namely, that of offering to your son good counsel and good examples ; in a word, of co-operating as much as is possible in his well-being, even to the point of supplying towards him, if need be, the place of his mother or father. Such is the sincere declaration which, without inquiring into what our opinions may be, no priest who has really understood the true social spirit of his ministry would hesitate to accept.

Whilst making this declaration here, I must, madame, specially thank you for the choice with which you and your worthy husband have honoured me, one which goes far in my case to atone for my unfortunate privation from the emotions which are most pleasurable in our natures. But besides this, permit me clearly to express my still more personal gratitude for the manner in which you have enabled me to take advantage of the happy supplementary tendency of this touching institution to strengthen the social bond by constituting an affectionate relationship between the two individuals who are the elements of the protecting couple. I shall always congratulate myself that, thanks to you, this opportunity of stimulating the affection which inspires us both, helps to render closer and more sacred the eternal friendship in which I have already bound myself to the noble companion whom you have chosen for me.

The tender attachment which you instinctively preserve for Catholicism, will, I hope, madame, enable you better to appreciate the importance of the different preceding remarks. In the gradually developing future which they anticipate you will perhaps be enabled later to understand that all the real value of this admirable social *chef-d'œuvre* of human wisdom, far from being seen finally to share the irrevocable decline of the

beliefs with which it is connected, will be carefully preserved in every way, and even much improved by the new mental *régime* towards which the *élite* of Humanity must now hasten.

I pray you, madame, specially on this happy day, to accept the cordial assurance of the affectionate sentiments of your devoted friend.

AUGUSTE COMTE

Paris, Thursday, 28 August, 1845.

